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Missionary couple survives disaster in Papua New Guinea

Alan Doerksen

UKARUMPA, Papua New Guinea — The *tsunami* that hit the northern coast of Papua New Guinea July 17 was instantaneous in its massive destruction. The local people and missionaries whose homes were destroyed by the huge wave are facing years of upheaval and uncertainty. But Christian agencies such as Wycliffe Bible Translators, World Vision and Mission Aviation Fellowship are helping New Guineans to rebuild their lives.

John and Bonnie Nystrom are an American couple who have worked since 1988 in Arop, a town on the northern coast of New Guinea which was completely wiped out by the tsunami. The Nystroms work with Wycliffe Bible Translators and have been advising four Arop men as they translate the Bible into the Arop language.

"We were at Ukarumpa, our translation centre in the interior highlands, when the tsunami hit," explains Bonnie Nystrom, in an e-mail interview with CC.

Only 16 days earlier, the Nystroms had been in Arop. If they had been there at the time of the disaster, they might not have survived.

COURTESY WORLD AND ZEALOUS SINGER

Papua New Guinean children. Many children died from the tsunami.

Home destroyed

"Our home was totally destroyed, as were all the other homes in Arop village," Nystrom reports. "When we saw the village from the air, we could not even be sure where our house had been located because everything was completely gone."

The Nystroms flew into Arop on July 19, two days after the tsunami, with relief items, such as medical supplies, matches and cooking pots.

"We spent the Sunday afternoon at the hospital in

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Can a beaver be an artist?

One of our readers, Dirk Brinkman, originally of Bowmanville, Ont., but now of Meadow Creek, B.C., took this picture of his son George sitting next to a piece of carving done by a beaver in nearby Gerrard, B.C.

The Brinkmans concluded that the beaver started chewing when the snow was two or three feet high and kept going around the tree while the snow melted down to nothing. The other possibility is that the beaver started when there was no snow and kept going while the snow started piling higher and higher.

The next year, though, this fair-sized conifer lay in the water. George, who operates a sawmill in Meadow Creek (which the editor visited on a recent excursion through British Columbia), is probably wondering how many boards or beams he could have cut out of this specimen.

New approach brings hope to pedophiles and community

Walfried E. Goossen

HAMILTON, Ont. — A few years ago Dan, a man long known to Rev. Harry Nigh, was released from prison having served his full sentence — for pedophilia. A prison psychologist called Nigh and asked if he could help Dan to reintegrate into the community. It was the fourth sentence Dan served on the same type of charge, this time a seven-year incarceration.

Nigh wanted to help. But how? Without a specific plan or funding, he and a group of volunteers formed a support group which met with Dan on a weekly basis.

The local police had to be informed that Dan was coming into the community. They flatly stated they didn't want him there. The police took an unusual step and released his name to the local daily. The next day

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News

Papua New Guineans search for meaning of tragedy

PHOTOS COURTESY HORST AND EUGENIE SCHULZ

Fallen palm trees line this stretch of the Papua New Guinean coast.

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Aitape, where most of the injured people are being evacuated," says Nystrom. "We wandered through the wards and crowds gathered outside trying to get information about our friends and neighbors."

Of the Nystroms' four national translator colleagues from Arop, one was killed. Another had an injured leg, but two of his daughters died. Two other workers and their families survived.

"Rudolph, our landlord and next-door neighbor, is known [to be] dead and no one could tell us about his family," says Nystrom. "There has been so much loss of life. Arops are telling us that half their population is gone — more than 1,000 people.... Most of the deaths are school-aged and younger children and the elderly.... We cried with a lot of people at the hospital as we heard their stories and as they listed their family members who are gone."

Bonnie Nystrom talks of the devastating, long-term aftermath: "Things will not be 'normal' for a long time, perhaps years. So many children were lost. The Arops will have to develop an entirely new way of life. Their livelihood came from the lagoon. It is no longer accessible to them. They will have to choose new leaders and a new place to live."

The Arop village was located on a spit of sand between a lagoon and the ocean. Right now, says Nystrom, the lagoon and its surrounding area are off limits because of the threat of disease from rotting bodies.

Intense relief work

"No one knows when the lagoon will be safe again," says Nystrom. She and her husband plan to revisit the area in late August to find out more.

Wycliffe and other Christian agencies are involved in intense relief work in the area affected by the tsunami. "The relief effort going on is amazing," asserts Nystrom. "Helicopters have been shuttling supplies into the jungle from the nearby airstrips and ferrying the injured out as long as daylight permits.

"Right now, the immediate needs for survival are being met. Several months from now, when the bodies are buried, the injured have been treated and the international news stops reporting about the disaster, the Arops will be left to rebuild their lives.... There will be many needs yet to be met. That is when our help will be needed most."

"At this point, our future is mostly question marks," admits Nystrom. "We are committed to finishing the translation of the Scriptures into the Arop language. When, where and how we will rebuild our house and translation office is uncertain."

Nystrom points out that her family still has a home in Ukarumpa, which is comfortable and equipped with everything they need. "We most certainly have not lost everything," explains Nystrom. "To be honest, we lost a lot of stuff, but it is replaceable." Fortunately, no original Bible translations were lost — only printed copies.

Searching for meaning

Reflecting on the tragedy, Nystrom says, "As we sat and cried with the people in the Aitape hospital, a hymn kept running through my mind: 'When peace like a river attendeth my way (our last time in Arop)/When sorrows like sea billows roll (now)/Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say/It is well, it is well with my soul.'

"I think it is normal in most tragedies to want to find meaning and purpose. I am asking God for increased spiritual sensitivity and unity among the Arop churches. However, I am specifically asking God to send a translation team to each of the other language [groups] touched by this disaster."

Papua New Guinean Christians have reacted in various ways to the disaster, says Nystrom. "Some are seeing it as God's punishment. Some are seeing it as a natural event and praising God for his protection of so many. Many are questioning their new-found Christian faith and are reacting according to their traditional beliefs that the spirits of their ancestors are angry and causing this devastation. If the spirits are not appeased with fruit and betel nut, and other food sacrifices, their wrath is unleashed."

The work ahead

Wycliffe has been working in Papua New Guinea since 1956 and now has over 1,000 workers there. Papua New Guinea has more than 800 languages, and so far, Wycliffe has translated the New Testament into 125 of these, according to Horst and Eugenie Schulz, the Niagara regional representative for Wycliffe.

The Schulzes worked in Papua New Guinea for more than 20 years, returning to Canada in April. Recently, they were part of a support team for the Nystroms.

World Vision Canada and Mission Aviation Fellowship of Canada are working to co-ordinate relief efforts in the country. The Spaenaur Foundation (based in Kitchener, Ont.) has donated $65,000 to these two agencies to ship antibiotics, pain relief medicines, anti-malaria drugs and surgical supplies to the stricken area.

World Vision reports that medicines and supplies have been donated by Canadian pharmaceutical companies via MAP International, a non-profit, international agency which serves as a clearing house for medical relief supplies.

To help the Arop people in their long-term recovery, Wycliffe has set up the Papua New Guinea Tidal Wave Relief Fund. Donations can be sent to: **Wycliffe Bible Translators, Box 2727, Huntingdon Beach, CA, 92647, or to the Canadian office at: P.O. Box 3068, Stn. B, Calgary, AB, T2M 4L6.**

John and Bonnie Nystrom and their children Brianna (l.) and Eric.

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British historic document a key to native land claim

MCC PHOTO BY BRUCE HEISTERKAMP

Darlene Johnston, Reg Good with the Royal Proclamation of 1763.

Rick Fast

WINNIPEG (MCC) — One can hear the enthusiasm in Reg Good's voice as he recalls finding the Royal Proclamation of 1763 — which embodies the rights of aboriginal people in Canada — in a British government office last year.

"I opened it up and I was very excited to see it," the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario volunteer said in a recent interview.

In his role as a land claims researcher with the Saugeen Ojibwa in Ontario's Bruce Peninsula, Good understands the significance of the photocopy he and research co-ordinator Darlene Johnston carried back from the Public Records Office in London, England.

"As far as we know, there are no copies in Canada," he says. "It embodies a lot of the rights that native people claim they're entitled to."

Issued by Britain, which at that time ruled the territory that is currently Canada, the Royal Proclamation committed the Crown to act in the best interests of aboriginal people, particularly with respect to the protection of their lands.

Rights acknowledged?

The Proclamation is interpreted by many aboriginal people as acknowledging their right to self-determination in their own territories, explains Good, who has been a half-time volunteer since September 1996, working out of his Kitchener, Ont., home.

The former archivist at Conrad Grebel College began his volunteer stint after the Saugeen Ojibwa lost federal funding for their land claims research.

In 1836, the Saugeen Ojibwa surrendered the southern parts of their territory in exchange for a promise that their retained lands on the Peninsula wouldn't be threatened by European settlement. But they were forced to surrender more land in 1854 and move north onto pockets of land that became their reserves.

The Saugeen Ojibwa believe the Crown failed to act in their best interests during this second, forced surrender of land. They have attempted to recover a portion of the land for the past 30 years.

From talking to suing

When one of the local municipalities moved to dispose of some of the disputed land, the Saugeen Ojibwa made the difficult decision to move from negotiation to litigation.

Turning to a court process resulted in lost federal funding and prompted the Saugeen Ojibwa to approach MCC for research assistance. Reg Good was the right fit. "It really meshes well with my interest, training and skills," says Good, whose PhD in history dealt with native land claims issues.

"He's brought some much needed organizational and technical expertise," says Johnston.

MCC has had a long history working with the Chippewa community of Cape Croker or Nawash (one of two communities involved in the land claim), beginning with an invitation to work at small-scale gardening in 1981.

Over the years, MCC has also placed volunteers who have worked alongside community members in both beef and greenhouse operations. Volunteers from Mennonite Disaster Service have helped rebuild a number of homes destroyed by fire.

MCC has advocated, since the early '90s, for expanded opportunities for Cape Croker commercial fishermen. "So there's some friendship and loyalty there," says Rick C. Bauman, co-ordinator of MCC Ontario's aboriginal neighbors program.

Bauman says MCC got involved with this particular land claim because of its direct effect on a number of Mennonite organizations. Both Chesley Lake Camp Association and Silver Lake Mennonite Camp are located within the claim area, although Bauman says it's highly unlikely their property will be affected.

Bauman says it's important to keep the Mennonite people in the area aware of the ongoing claim. He would like to see some positive relationships between the two groups emerge in this moment of overlapping interest.

While this hasn't happened yet, Bauman says the Mennonite camps haven't dug in their heels. "I've been pleased with the way they've been open to the conversations I've initiated," he says.

Good also sees potential in what could otherwise be a strained dialogue. "On a positive side, this provides an ideal opportunity for Mennonites to learn more about native history, native injustice and native aspirations."

And there is time for relationship-building. Johnston says the claim is still in a pre-trial stage. "We don't expect to get to trial before the year 2000." In fact, they're still working through the reams of records collected from England.

The highlight of that trip, however, was finding the original broadsheet of the Royal Proclamation. Besides the obvious sentimentality of holding a copy of the original proclamation, Johnston says it also has real legal implications.

"The copy is only as good as the copyist and you can see some subtle changes," she says. "The best evidence is always considered the original document."

Wonders and whistles on the old sea floor

John Wood

I spent the weekend hiking around the sea floor. It takes a bit of effort to get there, but anyone with a backpack, some stamina, and access to the Canadian Rockies can do the same.

The sea floor I was walking on is in the Kananaskis Country here in Alberta. This provincial park and recreation area has some of the most spectacular peaks in the world. Great slabs of sedimentary rock tens of kilometers long thrust edgewise toward the sky. Our route traced up the Alberta side of the continental divide to the crest and border with British Columbia. The ocean vista that stretched out before me was largely in my imagination. What one actually sees in the present is the raw beauty of bare sedimentary rock, which is only a shadow of the past marine glory.

There are many traces of those ancient oceans in the Rockies. In some places there are fossil corals and clam shells; elsewhere, traces of worm burrows, or simply lithic ripple marks of an ancient mud bottom. The rock record tells only a shadowy tale of the former glory of this "seascape." The interplay of forces that shaped the sand grains and mud in these rocks can only be seen in the mind's eye.

We listened to the ground squirrels whistle out an alarm, or watched as the chipmunks scampered after their meals in the meadow below the moraine. Here we could see the story continue. These little "earth movers" were hard at work shaping new soils.

Breaking down a mountain

It is a steep climb up into these hanging valleys where glacial remnants still grip the slopes. We scrambled our way up the huge ridges of broken rock, sand and mud, called moraines, that surround the lower end or sides of each glacier. At the top of these ridges the newly fractured rocks are painfully sharp. It doesn't take much imagination here to see earth's soil factory hard at work.

Solid rock is continuously being converted into smaller and smaller fragments by water, ice, sun and wind. All the while, gravity waits to fling the particles on the anvil. This is vigorous, even explosive work, albeit very slow. The biological soil forgers are mostly excluded up here by the sheer energy of the place.

Further down the slope the edges of the stones are softer, more rounded. Rock willow and other plants take root and start to stabilize the slopes. A meltwater stream carries glacial flour, the fine particles of ice-ground rock, as it descends. Its colors range from brown to milky white as the sediment load varies. A kilometer away it finally plunges over a rocky ledge in a spectacular falls where the mouth of the upper valley meets the deeper cut valley below. Earth's soils are forming here in a slow, endless process.

Humbling the human soul

Moraines, peaks, rock walls, sea floors and tiny creatures — it all has a way of humbling the human soul. "What are we human creatures," the Psalmist asks, "that God should think about or care for us?" I often wonder why we should stand out in all this vast time? Yet we do. And that is our burden and our glory.

My hope is that we will exercise well the skill we have at re-shaping the earth — which we haven't done in the past. It should give us pause to know that humans now move 40 billion tons of rock and earth across the world each year. We have outstripped the glaciers in churning up the earth! And we have come to rival the rivers in the ability to re-contour the land.

It would be good to pause and consider this power we turn so quickly to our every whim. I am glad for those who had the foresight to set aside our parks — places where we can still plainly see the forces large and small working their Master's will.

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College, Edmonton.

Editorial

Catching God's wind on our trip to B.C.

According to Aristotle, a wise person is never in a hurry. At least, that's how Jacob Needleman, author of *Time and the Soul* quoted the ancient philosopher on a radio program my wife and I listened to while driving back from British Columbia this summer. You can do things fast, even run to catch a bus, without being in a hurry, he said. As long as on the inside you are at rest.

I know what he means. There are times when I sit down and talk with someone and feel rushed inside. There are times when I work fast but inwardly feel calm and peaceful. According to Needleman, one has to be in touch with one's "timeless self" to achieve such serenity. That may take effort. The thing to do is to make yourself available for the gift of grace, said Needleman. "God sends the wind, but man raises the sail." And so he counselled people to do something useless from time to time, even if it is only for five minutes to walk away from your work and sniff the wind.

Well, my wife and I did something "useless" for four weeks! We drove to Calgary and then to Vancouver, and back again. We put another 10,555 kilometres on our car and tent trailer and just raised that sail to catch God's wind. This way you get in touch not only with your "timeless" selves, but with your "distanceless" children as well. My wife and I often say that this country is too big for properly maintaining familial relationships.)

Time and distance do seem to stand still, though, when you drive the obligatory 900 clicks a day. So you do crossword puzzles together, listen to the radio or tapes (we heard an excellent sermon on Romans 1 on the way), watch for animals and interesting road signs.

Where to look?

In Iron River, Michigan, we saw a sign that read: "Sorrow looks back, worry looks around, faith looks up." That's a neat way of reminding people that our lives are determined by where we look. Life is a journey, and we need that upward look to carry us onward. But for drivers who are taught to look ahead, behind, and around, it becomes confusing. You don't want to look up too much when you go barreling down Highway 1 near Golden, B.C., for example (yes, we had lunch in a Salmon Arm park two weeks before the fires started).

The Michigan road sign reminded me of a statement from C.S. Lewis's *Screwtape Letters*: "Nearly all vices are rooted in the future. Gratitude looks to the past and love to the present; fear, avarice, lust and ambition look ahead." Again it's about looking somewhere, but this time looking back and around you is good, and looking ahead is bad. Lewis wants us to realize that seeking our happiness in the future is a chasing after wind, a wind that is not God's wind of grace this time.

Faith is so personal

We listened to an interview with Stevie Cameron, a Toronto columnist and a self-confessed closet Christian. Cameron considers herself a faithful member of a Toronto Presbyterian church, but finds that it's easier to talk about one's sex life and personal finances than about one's faith. She dies every time her minister asks the congregation to shake hands and pass along the peace of Christ. "Faith is such a private part of us," she said. Maybe it's the fear of being mocked, being considered a Bible thumper, she said. Maybe it's the reluctance to impose on others. Cameron prefers to be a Christian by example rather than by proselytizing. She says that she works a lot with the poor in Toronto.

I could identify with this lady. She sounded like she had a lot of integrity. I loved the way she justified working in her own church and attending meetings she would rather skip: "It's only fair. You have to support this poor man, the minister, if you want to benefit from going to church." She understands duty and responsibility. But like many Calvinists, she manifests signs of "internalized faith syndrome" and perhaps she does not know quite how to more fully enjoy the love of Christ. Perhaps our own faith experiences can be very private, but do God's works of grace fall into the category of private acts? I need to work on this myself, too.

A plastic Jesus?

Oh, yes, there was another sign near Grand Rapids, Minnesota. The sign read: "Jesus: Don't leave earth without him." That's a cute allusion to the well-known slogan for a credit card company: "American Express: Don't leave home without it." I guess there's something appropriate about reminding travelers of life's journey of the need to have spiritual credit on hand.

But the slogan carries with it some disturbing implications. The suggestion is that in the same way that you don't need an American Express card at home but only on the road, so you don't need Christ on earth; you need him in heaven. I'm not saying that this is what the originators of the sign believe. I'm sure there are no Christians in this world who think they can do without Christ here on earth. But picking a catchy slogan can be tricky.

Take the suggested idea of a plastic-card Jesus. Doesn't that cheapen the message of the gospel? Jesus is not someone you can carry around with you like a wallet card, but he is the great Shepherd or the Vine who keeps *you* in *his* pocket — safe or alive in the only place where that is an issue: on earth.

Am I reading too much into the sign? Should I shut off my sensitivity to language and literary devices? Am I being a spoil sport? Perhaps. I do want to honor the intent of the group or church that wants to remind travelers of their eternal destiny and to make sure that more than their earthly expenses are taken care of.

This is not in critique of faithful Christians who put their money where their sign is. These are the ruminations of someone who was on vacation and who was not in a hurry.

Optimism is powerless

Did I tell you about the radio play put on by aboriginals and called "Dead Dog Cafe"? Said Jasper Friendly Bear: "Optimism can move mountains." To which Gracy Heavyhand replies: "It's faith that can move mountains; optimism just gets your hopes up."

We must have lacked faith then, because those mountains in Alberta and British Columbia sure didn't move much when we drove through them. They just sat there in all their splendor. Or maybe we did have the faith but we did not *want* to move those mountains. Yes, that's the optimistic view alright! **BW**

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Letters

Unmarried cohabitation is no laughing matter

A few comments on the correspondence between Adrian Peetoom and Mary VanderVennen ("Why bother getting married?", CC July 31). I find it very hard to chuckle, like Mary did, when reading Adrian's letter, while I fully agree with her response to Adrian.

Adrian writes that he cannot find "a clear prescription for marriage forms in the Bible." It seems to me that the spirit of the Bible is quite clear in this respect. Marriage is a commitment for life. Living together is lacking this commitment, enjoying the privileges of married life while not being ready to accept all the responsibilities. That kind of living together is immoral, and not so long ago we called this fornication.

What truly bothers me about Adrian's letter is that our young people are not helped at all by this "educational editor." In this world, living together has become pretty normal. Also among Christian young people, as Adrian suggests? I doubt that. Normal for nominal Christian young people perhaps, but not for those who are committed to Christ.

Undermining resolve

They have their temptations, but they struggle in their fight to stay pure till the official day of their marriage. The reason why I cannot find humor in Adrian's statement is that he undermines their resolve to be steadfast in their fight.

If there is anything to chuckle about in Adrian's letter it is about this sentence concerning those who, after living together, decided to take the official plunge: "...It was the maturity of their marriage that was celebrated on the day civic and church officials were asked to do their things, perhaps some years later."

This sentence suggests clearly the immaturity — and by inference, the irresponsibility — of the decision to just live together for a while.

Responsible church councils are asking couples who want to be married in a church ceremony after having lived together to confess that their way of life was contrary to God's will as expressed particularly in the fifth and seventh commandments. They should continue to do so.

Lammert Slofstra
St. Catharines, Ont.

What about those 'timeless truths'?

In the editorial "Reformed agencies reflect on their place in a changing world," (CC, July 3) we read that, "Nearly 50 people, most of them leaders representing Christian organizations, met to discuss how to carry on amid changing times and changing faces."

This in itself is a positive given. It is good to see so many people come together to discuss the work of Christians and Christian organizations in Canada.

However, I would like to see more light shed on a few statements made by Dr. Henk Hart. We read that "Dr. Hart of the Institute for Christian Studies, urged members of the Reformed community to shed ethnic and denominational stereotyping and to seek a worldview that places us in the world where there is the most suffering." What does that "denominational stereotyping" consist of?

As long as it means that we must help Christians where they suffer most in this world, I agree most heartily.

But Dr. Hart said more. He also said, "The Bible does not provide us with timeless principles." But "we should work today with principles the Spirit gives us."

Since the editorial is dealing with *Reformed* agencies and *Reformed* institutions, and "we should live out of what it means to be *Reformed*," (last paragraph), we are reminded of the "Three Forms of Unity" of the Reformed faith.

One of them, the *Belgic Confession*, teaches that "for since it is forbidden *to add unto or take away anything from the Word of God*, it does thereby evidently appear that the doctrine thereof is most perfect and complete in all respects" (Article 7). When Dr. Hart says that "the Bible does not provide us with timeless principles" but "we should work today with the principles the Spirit gives us," he says, in fact, that biblical doctrine is *not* "most perfect and complete in all respects," but our confession claims it is! Obviously one of the two statements is not Reformed. How must we see this?

I would like to know, for this is very important.

Gilbert Zekveld
Hamilton, Ont.

Dr. Hart has written an opinion piece (which we hope to publish in the next issue) in which he elaborates on what he means by his statement. We hope that this will be the beginning of a good discussion. **Editor**

CPJ does not relativize truth

It was with surprise and disappointment that we read Harry Antonides' misinformed rebuttal of Gerald Vandezande's comments on the Supreme Court ruling regarding Delwin Vriend and CPJ's position regarding legal equality rights and equitable social, economic and fiscal benefits for same-gender couples in the latest CC ("Christians should not contribute to moral 'dumbing down,'" July 24).

Disagreement among Christians on such a controversial issue is to be expected and even welcomed — we all grow through healthy, informed debate. When such a debate occurs in a public forum like CC, it is incumbent on participants to fairly and accurately communicate the position of those with whom we disagree. Failure to do so suggests a lack of respect not just for our opponents, but also for CC and its readers.

Harry draws *half a sentence* from a letter to the editor by CPJ's Gerald Vandezande (CC, June 26), ignores both the context of the sentence and the other points made in the letter, and on that basis alleges that:

* CPJ's position is based on "a post-modern mindset where all truth is relative";
* CPJ's "approach to law and public policy... is tied to no standards at all";
* CPJ and those who support our public policy position are contributing "to the secularization of life in Canada, with all its pathologies and moral dumbing-down."

Had Harry read the rest of Gerald's letter, he would have come to this concluding sentence: "So, I would contend that our governments should protect human rights *and* settle conflicting human rights claims on the basis of public justice principles that equally protect all in the exercise of their public rights and public responsibilities."

Constructive discussion

Difficult questions do arise about the extent and limits of certain rights when these rights come into conflict. Such questions call for our constructive engagement with neighbors and institutions in striving for mutually respectful ways to justice and equity. *Christians especially must never allow the complexity of an issue to be used as an excuse to deny people justice and human rights.*

The point is that gays and lesbians are entitled to the same legal protection by the governments and the courts as everyone else; they are not second-class citizens.

CPJ staff, board, members and supporters spent many months working together to develop and articulate what we believe to be a faithful public policy response to Jesus' call to love our neighbor as ourselves when it comes to the matter of rights and responsibilities for gay and lesbian couples. We have carefully explained our position on the human rights of same-gender couples to equality before the law in a wide variety of fora, including CC. It is most clearly outlined in our 1996 publication "Legal Equality: A Public Justice Response to Discrimination Against Gays and Lesbians" (available from CPJ for $5; call 1-800-667-8046).

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News/Family

Circles of Support change lives

... continued from page 1

his picture was on the front page and his neighbors, almost hysterical with fear for their children, demanded he be removed from their community.

Understandably, Dan became unglued. Having made an effort to make a new start and to overcome his problem, his recovery was sabotaged, at least temporarily, by the very people who hope he will never offend again. "It was a terrible time for us," says Nigh. At the same time, he believes the reaction was predictable. But how to change it?

COURTESY JULIE BENDER

Julie Bender

A change of mind

Nigh established a group of volunteers which he called a "Circle of Support" to work with the pedophile. After several months the police made a dramatic turn around and came to Nigh and his group for help. Another child abuser was about to be released to return to his hometown, Hamilton. They wanted to know if a Circle of Support was possible for this man as well.

The police could not guarantee neighbors that the man would not offend again, and saw the advantage of having a group of dedicated people in close relationship with him. Nigh and his friends could not guarantee anything either, but this new approach was worth a try.

Soon another Circle was begun in Toronto for another man about to be released. Hugh Kirkegaard, a community chaplain who had been involved with the Hamilton group, the first such "Circle," organized this one. Since 1994, 16 Circles of Support, now funded by Corrections Canada, have sprung up.

It is vital to Nigh, who is on sabbatical from his church and volunteer community centre, the Welcome Inn, that the public understands that this is not just a bleeding-heart, hand-holding, approach.

The offending men, referred to as core members, first of all have to convince Nigh and his colleagues that they are highly motivated before they leave prison. They have to enter a covenant with their Circle which obligates them to be accountable to the group. The slightest departure from this agreement terminates their program quickly and automatically.

The church's role

Julie Bender, co-pastor at Hamilton Mennonite Church and a social worker, is co-ordinator of the Hamilton Circle.

"Our volunteers are wonderful," she says, "because they are willing to extend grace to someone who has messed up his life." They are largely laypeople but some are professionals.

"We generally start with the faith communities," she explains. "We generally encourage them to think about the church's role in this." Not all churches are ready to get involved, but we keep searching and "find a few here and there."

Nigh says the risk that these men will offend again is high, even five to seven years after being released from prison. "We can't be naive about that," he stresses. "The Circle groups are not just about support. The bottom line is the safety of the community, specifically the children. We've had to blow the whistle on a couple of guys."

Psychiatrist Howard Barbaree and other doctors at the Clarke Institute in Toronto believe pedophelia, though probably incurable, can be managed within and by the community. Bender feels strongly that to abandon offenders to their loneliness, and their stigma and public abuse "is a higher risk than to give them support."

But, does the community benefit? Nigh points out that "sexual offenders are more than offenders. They are often gifted, intelligent human beings and have a capacity to love. They can contribute to the community significantly if they are given opportunity and support."

The most significant benefit for the community is that while these men are managing their "terrible condition" with the help of the community they are not victimizing children.

'Decent guys'?

Bender tells of one man who was converted to Christianity. The day he was baptized he gave a witness in a Hamilton church which transformed the whole church. The whole congregation gave him a standing ovation for what he had become. Two weeks ago, Bender attended his wedding and the church is now participating in this revolutionary experiment.

She says of her work during the last six months with two core members, "It's been a real joy for me. They were both decent guys and are very motivated to get their lives together." She identifies the primary principle underlying the Circle of Support approach as restorative justice, a more humane treatment than the usual largely punitive measures.

A pedophile a decent guy? It requires a very special vision and amazing grace to see it. It is too early after only four years to measure the effectiveness of the Circles of Support. But they bring new hope not just for pedophiles, but for children and the community as well.

'Enough already!'

Marian den Boer

It costs a bundle to park at the hospital in downtown Hamilton — eight dollars a day if you spend any amount of time there. Marty and I have spent a lot of time there visiting our 17-year-old daughter who is being treated for depression.

Probably because we are Dutch, we decided not to use the hospital lot, but to park in available spots along nearby side streets. This has turned out to be not as simple as it sounds.

The City of Hamilton has some very complicated rules about parking in the streets, particularly in the vicinity of hospitals. These rules are all spelled out on red and white signs, inside parking meters and on yellow stickers attached to the meter posts. They are spelled out in even greater detail on the six-section parking tickets that we consistently find flapping about under the windshield wiper of our parked vehicle.

The night we brought Alison in, Marty parked the car beside a parking meter. It was late Monday evening, well *after the 6 p.m. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday* when a person no longer has to feed the meter. But when we got back to the car at about 3 a.m. there was this red, green and white ticket envelope on our windshield. We were being fined $30 (early payment $20) for parking on a through street between 2 a.m. and 7 a.m. How could we have missed it? There it was in plain black and yellow small print halfway down the parking meter post: *NO PARKING BETWEEN 2 A.M. AND 7 A.M.* We've also been fined $20 for parking at a meter which we faithfully fed while neglecting to read the sign about *no parking between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m.* Then there is the $20 fine I received while parked at a sign proclaiming: *THREE-HOUR PARKING.* I didn't see the sign right beside it that said: FIRE ROUTE, *NO PARKING.*

Penny wise, pound foolish

Needless to say, we've become very careful, but it doesn't seem to make a difference. Take the time I went to visit Alison for the afternoon. I was somewhat later than I said I would be, so I was quite delighted when I found a spot within close range of the hospital doors. In fact, I thanked the Lord for letting me have such a good spot right under a shady tree next to a big red mailbox.

I pulled into the spot and three times I read the sign right outside my van window. It said THREE-HOUR *PARKING,* with arrows pointing both ways. I checked the curb to see that I wasn't blocking any driveways.

Secure in the fact that I was legally parked, I spent a rather enjoyable afternoon with Alison, who was doing quite well.

When I returned, the ticket I found under my wiper came as a total surprise. *Set fine: $75; early payment: $50. I had parked within 10 feet of a fire hydrant.*

As an added touch the ticketing officer had noted along the edge of the ticket in pen in capital letters: "Complete obstruction of hydrant at rear bumper." Sure enough, there was a bright red hydrant right next to the mailbox.

By now we've paid the City of Hamilton much more than we would have paid the hospital if we had used the lot. Yet we must be the proverbial gluttons for punishment because we still insist on parking in the streets with the mish-mash of rules — just because we're Dutch, I guess.

Our most recent fine was $8 for exceeding paid time at a meter. Actually we didn't feed the meter because it was after 6 p.m., not realizing of course that the day was already Thursday, when you have to put money in the meter until 9 p.m. Sometimes all you can do is laugh.

Marian den Boer lives with her husband, Marty, and six children in Hamilton, Ontario, where they are learning first-hand about obeying the authority under which you put yourself.

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Film Review

Ever After *happily revives the Cinderella tale*

Marian Van Til

Ever After

Rated PG. Stars Drew Barrymore, Anjelica Huston, Dougray Scott, Jeanne Moreau. Written by Susannah Grant, Any Tennant and Rick Parks. Directed by Andy Tennant.

Despite its nondescript title, this film is a surprisingly satisfying, live-action adaptation of the Cinderella story. It has intelligence, humor and pathos aplenty, a romantic plot line to quicken the heart of any adolescent, and some very fine acting.

The story is sandwiched between a clever prologue and epilogue in which a 19th century French dowager meets with the Brothers Grimm (remember them?).

The famous story-telling brothers discuss with the elderly woman the various versions of the fable of the Little Cinder Girl, including their own, but after they hear *her* tale, they marvel. The story is no fable! she says. It's true! And she sets about to prove it.

'True' story

This "historical" frame around the story is both a neat dramatic device designed to convince us of the "authenticity" of the fairy tale, and a way of delighting us in being led back to 17th century France, where the dowager's great-great grandmother, Cinderella, waged her struggle for survival.

Cinderella, we're told, was an actual and lively person with a real name: Danielle (Drew Barrymore).

Danielle's father, a long-time widower (well-known Dutch actor Jeroen Krabbe in a small but compelling role), has raised her and they share a very special bond. But when Danielle is eight years old, her father remarries. His new wife is a widowed baroness, Rodmilla (Anjelica Huston), who herself has two daughters. Barely has this family blended when Danielle's father drops dead, and from then on, happiness for Danielle becomes elusive.

Unable to bear the sight of her dead husband's daughter, who resembles him too closely for comfort, the Baroness relegates the girl to the role of servant. The story picks up again a decade later, as Danielle turns 18 with little hope of her sad lot ever changing, and as the Baroness's daughters (but particularly the blonde elder one, her mother's favorite) are spurred by their mother to make a good marriage — i.e., to find a wealthy husband who will support his wife and her mother in the manner to which they've been accustomed, at least in their dreams.

Who would be a better prospect than the crown prince himself? The handsome Prince Henry is a "neighbor" of sorts, as some of the King's lands abut their modest estate and farm.

Who's rescuing whom?

In the traditional tale, of course, all three sisters attend a courtly ball and the (unnamed) prince chooses to marry the woman whose foot fits a beautiful glass slipper he finds, which Cinderella has left behind in her hurry to get home before midnight. For that's when a lovely spell will be broken and the prancing horses and elegant coach will revert to mice and a pumpkin, and her lovely dress and glass slipper(s) will retrogress into rags.

Drew Barrymore with Dougray Scott

But here, Prince Henry is in more need of rescuing than "Cinderella" is; and who better to do it but this resourceful, guileless (and, of course, beautiful) young woman? Having integrity which her step-family lacks, Danielle gets to know the prince without the least conniving or selfish thought. Having suffered as a servant, she has a keen sense of justice and she boldly, if naively, calls the unthinking prince on his niggardly attitudes towards his own servants.

Henry is intrigued: no one, much less an attractive young woman, has ever spoken to him thus. He wants to see more of her. It seems he has for some time been feeling like a caged bird, and has no real appetite for being King. Nor does he have the least desire, amorous or otherwise, to marry the Spanish bride his parents insist upon for political reasons.

Needless to say, all eventually ends happily, and justice is meted out to those deserving of it. But in the meantime the story takes interesting and creative twists and turns. The story neatly illustrates the biblical truth that the last shall be first, and the first, last.

Rounding out flat characters

Fortunately, good acting and a generally commendable script prevent these characters from remaining the stereotypes of the written fairy tale, flat figures conceived more to make a moral point than to jump off the page as full-blooded human beings.

In Anjelica Huston's skillful treatment, for example, the Baroness is not so much the blatantly wicked stepmother of the classic fairy tale as a frustrated, lonely woman whose love for her short-lived husband turns into an aversion to Danielle and an outrageous striving on behalf of her own daughters, which brings out all her worst qualities. (At the same time, thankfully, Huston and the script avoid making Rudmilla an anachronistic caricature of a "dysfunctional" 20th century woman.)

Drew Barrymore provides Danielle/Cinderella with just the right balance of strength and vulnerability, and British newcomer Dougray Scott effectively depicts Prince Henry's gradual transformation from idle but good-hearted blue-blood who wants to duck his public responsibility to caring man worthy of the name prince, who will stand up for his convictions.

Happily, *Ever After* is a kind of historical/modern hybrid whose modern sensibilities (a sense of social justice prime among them) don't detract from or clash with the original intent of the story. This is a film the whole family can — and will — enjoy.

Please note:
Christian Courier *did not publish an issue on Aug. 14.*

Famed gospel singer aids burned churches

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (EP) — Gospel great Kirk Franklin and his record companies have pledged $250,000 to help rebuild black churches in the American South which have been destroyed by arson attacks. The money will be donated to the burned churches fund established by the National Council of Churches.

Funds will come from sales of Franklin's new single "Lean on Me." The new song, which encourages people to help those in need, features guest vocals from Crystal Lewis, Bono (from U2), R. Kelly and Mary J. Blige.

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Israeli Messianic Jews join TWR for historic broadcast

CARY, N.C. (TWR) — A new Hebrew language program, produced by Messianic Jews within Israel, is now being aired to Israel by international broadcaster Trans World Radio (TWR).

Called "Kol HaYeshua" ("Voice of Salvation"), the 30-minute program is aired via a powerful AM transmitter in central Asia. Daily broadcasts began August 1. They represent TWR's first medium wave (AM) program in Hebrew to cover the entire country of Israel.

Speakers for this unique initiative are Messianic Jewish leaders who display a passion to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to fellow Israelis in a culturally relevant and engaging manner. All program production, promotion and follow-up work to the broadcasts is being handled by Messianic congregations in Israel.

Various Israeli Messianic Jewish leaders and artists have contributed their messages and music. Scripts radiate the Israeli Jewish culture. One program includes a biblical series from the book of Daniel, which presents "the God of Israel as the loving Father of the Jewish people." Another surveys current events and Orthodox Jewish themes to "introduce Jesus as the Messiah and Prince of Peace." Still another explores the Messiah in Talmudic literature.

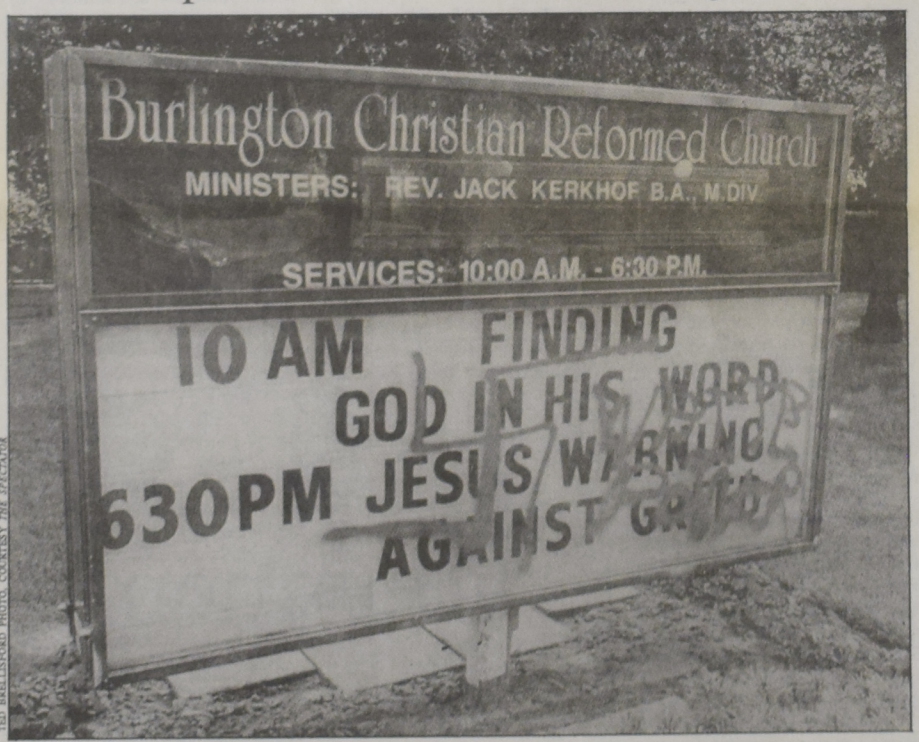
Israelis share faith

In addition, content will be theological in nature and probe apologetics and applications for today. The broadcasts are also personal. One features interviews with Israeli believers as they share how Jesus became their personal Savior and how He could become Israel's Redeemer, too.

Assessing the spiritual power behind such radio broadcasts, one Messianic Jewish leader recently commented: "I am Jewish and receive the Lord [as the Messiah and my Savior] in 1983 through a message on the book of Isaiah that I heard on a radio station. I was living in a kibbutz and didn't know of any other believers in the land. Every evening I listened to the messages. This is how I was taught for two years. Radio is a wonderful medium. I know it worked for me and that I am not the only one."

Trans World Radio broadcasts weekly more than 1,200 hours of Christian programming in over 140 languages from 12 primary transmitting sites and by satellite to three continents. Each year more than 1.4 million letters are received in response to the programs from listeners in over 160 countries.

Vandals paint swastika on CRC sign



TED BARLISFORD PHOTO, COURTESY THE EXPOSITOR

The defaced sign at Burlington Christian Reformed Church.

Alan Doerksen

BURLINGTON, Ont. — Vandals spray-painted a swastika on the sign of Burlington Christian Reformed Church on Aug. 4. Rev. Jack Kerkhof says he has no idea why his church would be the target of vandals. "We haven't taken a stand on anything that would have caused waves," he told *Burlington News*.

Kerkhof told CC, "It's unfortunate that this mentality does exist, even if it is the work of young people who might not know the significance of that mark. I'd like to think it's the work of people who don't know what it means, but you never know. Who are we to assume that this kind of hate does not exist here?"

He noted that most young people in the area are "good kids." But church officials have had to ask some youth to leave the church property on occasion after graffiti was found on the outside of the building. That graffiti contained no swastikas or references to Nazis.

After Kerkhof discovered the swastika, he tried to clean the church sign, but to no avail. One member of his church told him the sign would have to be replaced. But he reported that on the evening of August 4, two "Good Samaritans" came along and offered to clean the sign. The two people, who didn't tell Kerkhof their names, told him, "We just want to do this because we're Christians."

Kerkhof said the two often pass the church and enjoy reading the sign, which the church uses as an evangelistic tool. After an hour's work, the sign was clean, reported Kerkhof.

Pope tightens control of bishops

VATICAN CITY (EP) — Further strengthening the Vatican's control of Roman Catholic bishops, Pope John Paul II issued new rules governing statements by bishops on controversial issues such as homosexuality.

Issued July 23, the rules require conferences of bishops to reach unanimous agreement before issuing statements on doctrinal issues. Conferences which cannot reach a unanimous agreement may appeal to the Vatican, but approval will not be given "if the majority requesting it is not substantial," said the Pope.

The new policy will make it difficult for conferences of bishops in large countries, such as the U.S. and Brazil, to issue statements.

That's probably no accident, since those conferences have issued a number of pronouncements opposed by the Vatican. The new policy comes a few weeks after the Vatican issued rules imposing greater control on Catholic theologians and ending official debate on ordination of women.

They trust the church, but don't attend

RIGA, Latvia (EP) — The people of Latvia have great trust in their churches, according to a recent opinion poll. The survey found that Latvians rank their churches higher for trustworthiness than any other Latvian institution (64.7 per cent). Radio broadcasting was next on the list, considered trustworthy by 64.2 per cent of the population.

Television is trusted by 63.2 per cent of the population, and print media by only 45.5 per cent. Government agencies and trade unions ranked lowest in the survey. The findings are surprising because only 1.8 per cent of Latvia's non-naturalized population belongs to a church.

Church must act to prevent drug abuse

CHICAGO, Ill. (EP) — The church needs to take an active role in preventing drug abuse, according to Loretta E. Horton, director of social ministry for congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Horton hosted the ELCA's Substance Abuse Consultation July 24-25.

"The church is the centre of health, well-being and healing. It is natural for the church to respond to the affects of chemical and substance abuse in the family and in the congregation," said Horton. "People involved in substance abuse are not spiritually healthy." Horton said the ELCA plans to create tools to help churches launch substance abuse programs.

Conservative Lutherans shun ecumenism, consider name change

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (EP) — Delegates to the 60th convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) expressed "deep regret" and "profound disagreement" with the ecumenical initiatives being pursued by their spiritual cousins in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Sparking the objections is the ELCA declaration establishing "full communion" with the Reformed Church in America (RCA) and the United Church of Christ (UCC) — the latter considered by many to be the most "liberal" church in the U.S. — and work being done toward an agreement with the Roman Catholic Church on the doctrine of justification.

Delegates to the LCMS convention reiterated their objection to Reformed doctrine on the nature of communion, and to Catholicism on the issue of justification.

Delegates also voted to begin the process of changing the denomination's name. Supporters of a change argue that the "Missouri Synod" part of the name is confusing and does not adequately reflect the church's present membership. The process is expected to result in recommendations for a new name to be considered at the church's 2001 "synod."

The 2.6 million-member LCMS is the second largest Lutheran body in the U.S. The theologically conservative, separatist denomination was initially known as the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States, and took its present name at its centennial convention in 1947.

Swindoll plans new church

DALLAS, Texas (EP) — Rev. Charles Swindoll, best-selling author and president of Dallas Seminary, is about to take on another job — pastor.

Swindoll announced July 23 that he plans to launch an interdenominational church in Frisco, Texas, a wealthy suburb north of Dallas. The 63-year-old author served three churches, including one in Fullerton, California, before coming to Dallas Seminary in 1994.

Another mega-church

The church, which will be named Stonebriar Community Church, is expected to grow quickly. Organizers plan to build a 2,500-seat auditorium by next spring on land that is now a 60-acre cornfield. That auditorium will be eventually used as a family life centre when a planned 6,000-seat auditorium is completed.

The northern suburbs of Dallas are already home to two mega-churches. Prestonwood Baptist Church is building a 7,000-seat auditorium six miles from the site of Swindoll's proposed church, while Fellowship Church just finished a new 4,100-seat sanctuary.

Swindoll said, "With the kind of growth we're seeing out in the Frisco area, I can envision a remarkable beginning as folks from all over, searching for this kind of church, can find what they have been hungering for."

He added that the church will be a place "where Christ will be exalted and God's people will be nurtured — people of all ages, colors, cultures and backgrounds." Components of the church will include "great music, meaningful worship, in-depth relationships, evangelistic zeal and, certainly, a strong Bible-teaching ministry," he said.

Swindoll, a conservative evangelical with Reformed leanings, intends to continue as president of Dallas Seminary, and as host of the radio program "Insight for Living."

The 'Promised Land'

Chapter & Verse

Wayne Brouwer
● Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
Al Wolters

When God made a covenant with Abraham he promised him blessings that included countless descendants as well as the land of Canaan. We know how Abraham became the father of a multitude no one can count. The New Testament teaches that all who are by faith united to Christ have Abraham as their father.

But how about the land? The promises are so explicit: "The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you" (Gen. 17:8). "To your descendants I give this land from the river of Egypt, to the great river, the Euphrates" (Gen. 15:18).

A basic rule for Bible interpretation is that the New Testament determines how the Old Testament should be understood, because the New is the fulfillment of the Old. However, the New Testament does not seem to say much about the real estate God promised to Abraham's children. For that reason many evangelical Christians believe that this promise is still outstanding. They think that the land of Canaan or Palestine is still reserved for the natural descendants of Jacob.

Enlarging the inheritance

Jesus and Paul do not address the matter of the land, directly, but indirectly and with great subtlety. The Old Testament said: "A little while and the wicked will be no more. But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace" (Ps. 37:10-11). The "land" which those who hope in God inherit, is Canaan.

But when Christ makes this a beatitude he says: "Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). The earth is bigger than the land. The inheritance has been enlarged.

Paul says "Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world" (Rom. 4:13). The inheritance is not merely the land of Palestine but the cosmos!

Paul makes the same subtle and significant shift when he quotes the fifth commandment. The Old Covenant law said: "Honor your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you" (Ex. 20:12, Deut. 5:16). That land was Canaan.

But Paul says in Eph. 6:2,3: "'Honor your father and your mother' — which is the first commandment with a promise — 'that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.'" The law is still valid and the promise is still in force but the territory is enlarged to "the earth."

Abraham's offspring

The reinterpretation of the Promised Land is clearest in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is the place where God's people find rest — at last. It can be entered only by faith in God. In the past many could not enter because of their unbelief. They sinned and their bodies fell in the desert.

As for us, the Promised Land still lies ahead. "Today if you hear his voice harden not your hearts." Trust and obey. Follow the better Joshua who leads us to the rest of the Promised Land (Heb. 3:7; 4:11).

We who believe in and belong to Christ are Abraham's offspring and heirs (Gal. 3:28). We are heirs of the New World that God is preparing. Canaan was the Old Covenant pledge of the real country of God's people.

In the New Covenant the inheritance of God's people is neither cancelled nor postponed, but fulfilled. It is enlarged and enriched.

We expected silver and he gives us gold. We are traveling to the land that flows with milk and honey where we will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb (Deut. 31:19-20; Rev. 15:3-4).

"Great and marvellous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty." The land, the real land, the whole earth, will be ours when the last enemy is destroyed.

Andrew Kuyvenhoven is a retired Christian Reformed pastor and a former editor of The Banner, *the official publication of the CRC. He lives in Grand Rapids, Mich.*

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Little silk spider

by
Vivian M. Loken

Let's call this creature of God "Many-Legs." She's a spider, and the Scripture says in Genesis 1:24 that God made every creeping thing.

Although most spiders are harmless, some people are afraid of them. Since they eat disease-spreading insects, such as flies and mosquitoes, we should appreciate spiders.

If you watch Many-Legs for a while, you will see that she is never idle. Not all spiders make webs, but Many-Legs does. She is a garden spider.

We notice that when she moves from a fence/post to a tall weed she brings along a dragline. A dragline is a thread she weaves from the silk in her body. The thread comes out in liquid form. After becoming exposed to the air, it dries. Then, it changes to a shining silk thread.

Many-Legs has begun spinning her web. It will take here about an hour. If you can stay to watch for a while, I will too.

Starting at the centre of the orb-web, the spider moves outward. With sticky thread she makes the spokes and finishes the spiral.

HANS PFLETSCHINGER FROM PETER ARNOLD

Silky coffin

Over here a few steps is another web that looks like a tiny bedsheet. It is funnel-shaped. The maker of this web wove a little pocket underneath.

She is probably lying in there now. Like Many-Legs, she doesn't need to hunt for prey. She waits for an insect to become tangled in her net.

After the insect is caught, she binds it down securely with dry, silk thread. Then, she can either eat it immediately or save it for a snack later.

The spider that spins sheet-webs make them outdoors or in corners of a building. It might be in a palace or a tumbledown shack. The spider is at home anywhere.

The most common web is the one we call a cobweb. Some cobwebs are put together without any real design. Others are woven into intricate patterns.

Let's go back to the orb web. Well, see here! It's finished. Many-Legs added a patch in the middle made with shinier threads.

Some people think she does that to warn the birds: "Stay away! Don't fly into my web and destroy it!"

Nothing for us to fear

Shall we look farther? Over here is a zigzag web. That has a trap in it, too, but it's harder to find.

You're afraid? Why, you needn't be! These spiders don't harm us. Their venom doesn't affect human beings.

I notice that you call spiders "insects." They aren't. Insects have wings and antennae. Spiders have neither. Spiders are arachnids.

You can always tell a spider because its body has to sections. Spiders might have two eyes or as many as eight. They always have eight legs.

Let's watch Many-Legs for a while again. Do you know that she spends her time building or mending webs?

For many centuries people have admired her silken threads. A spider's silk is produced by glands in its abdomen. The thread comes out of its spinnarets. It spins with its mouth and legs.

Innate knowledge

One kind of spider in tropical countries is brightly colored and makes colored webs. Fishermen in that part of the world search for the webs, take them apart, and use them for fishing nets. The silk is stronger than it appears.

Nobody teaches a spider how to weave. It is born with the instinct. Think how long it takes us to learn how to tie our shoes — and to read!

As for reading, hundreds of thousands of poems have been written about spiders' webs. And just as many photographs have been taken. The most beautiful subject is an orb-web in the garden, threaded with dewdrops.

People are more likely to notice webs than spiders. E.B. White's fictional spider, Charlotte, is an exception. Wilbur was E.B. White's storybook pig in danger of being slaughtered. To protect Wilbur, Charlotte wove words into her webs in his pen. "Some pig," she wove, then "terrific," and "radiant."

Her last-ditch effort was weaving the word "humble" into the web in Wilbur's pen at the state fair.

Those words made Wilbur famous. The end of Charlotte's life had come, but Wilbur lived on. Charlotte made him too famous to be sacrificed for ham and bacon.

Serenades his intentions

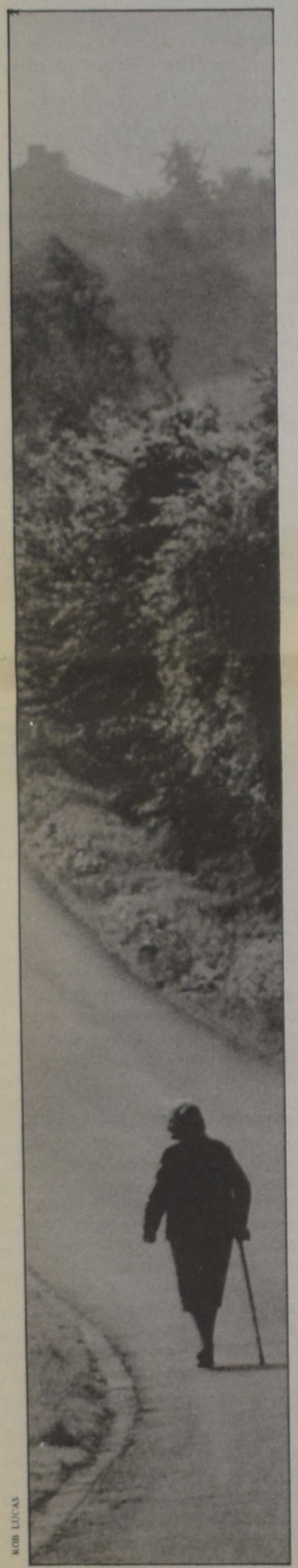
In their private lives, spiders mate and produce young. I don't think we are going to watch a romance right now, but a male spider could come looking for Many-Legs.

If one does, he will rest on the web. Then, he will pluck the threads in a slow, steady motion, serenading her, if you will. That tells Many-Legs about her caller. He is saying that he is of the same species and he'd like to be her mate.

If she mates, Many-Legs will lay eggs. She will wrap them in silk for protection until they hatch.

We have watched a miracle today. Many-Legs simply did what she does best. She is a story of God's creation, who by using her craft, wove her own story in the garden.

Vivian M. Loken is a freelance writer from Minneapolis, Minn.



ROB LUCAS

Broken flowers

Marion Schoeberlein

Ingrid stared at the wax roses on the night table beside her bed.

"I wonder why Betty didn't bring silk roses," she thought, "she knows I like silk flowers and she can afford them. She has a good job now."

A nurse came into the room. "How are you feeling today, Mrs. Bennett?"

"I don't know yet," she said honestly. How did one ever feel in the psychiatric ward of a hospital? After the volcano had erupted — the awful divorce — Ingrid had suffered a nervous breakdown.

The way out would be to end her life, she had decided. She had tried suicide without success, by taking alcohol and sleeping pills. Then her children, Betty and Donald, had committed her to the hospital.

"Let's have a try at dressing yourself this morning," the nurse smiled. "The breakfast trays will be here soon."

"I have a pain in my back," Ingrid complained, "you'll have to help me."

"Okay." The nurse knew it was an imaginary pain, but she was used to this kind of complaint.

After Ingrid was dressed the nurse put a comb into her hand. "Your hair is so pretty," she said, "why don't you comb it yourself today?"

Ingrid stood in front of the mirror. She knew her hair wasn't pretty. It had turned gray since the divorce.

"The chaplain will come to visit with you today," the nurse said."He's been wanting to speak to you. He's such a nice man."

"I don't want to see him. He's like my husband. He pretended to be religious and he abused me. Every one at church thought he was nice, too."

"Mrs. Bennett, you don't have to talk to him if you don't want to," the nurse continued.

Ingrid started combing her hair. "I want to go to a party today," she said, "some happy place that makes me feel like a rainbow. I've had enough sorrow and depression in my life."

"A party would be nice, dear," the nurse agreed, "we'll see."

Ingrid looked out of the window as the person she considered her tormenter left.

"She pretends she's interested in me," Ingrid said, staring out at the snow, "but she isn't."

The snow reminded her of big white flowers. She loved walking in snow.

Back home in Norway she and her brother, Knut, had taken many walks together in the snow.

"I wish I could go home. I wish my brother was still alive to take me there," Ingrid thought.

Her heart always hammered when she had to be in a group of people. Her husband had been right. He always told her she was not a good mixer, not outgoing.

Breakfast was over and she was with the group. Everyone was making something. Ingrid was trying to decorate a cigar box with contact paper. It was one of her projects.

Everyone was kept very busy, even cooking meals for themselves if they could.

"Mrs. Bennett, your daughter wants to talk to you," a nurse called her. She followed the nurse into the hall to the telephone.

"I hate it here, Betty," Ingrid confided in a childish tone, "they watch me all the time. They even listen in on every telephone conversation."

Betty assured her that she could come home to her own apartment as soon as the doctor released her.

"I have to get back to my project." Ingrid was getting nervous now. "I have to do a good job on it."

She hung up the telephone. Then she turned to the listening nurse and stuck out her tongue. *Is there still a God in the world?* She muttered.

It was seven weeks later.

"Mrs. Bennett, you've made considerable progress in the last six weeks you've been here" Dr. Adams was talking to Ingrid now. "Do you think you'll feel well enough to go out into the world again next week — back to your own apartment?"

"I think so. My children will be coming often to look in on me. They promised. Donald even said he would paint my apartment."

"Good. Then I feel confident I'll be able to release you in about ten days."

"Doctor, I want you to know that I really hated it when I came here, but I made a lot of friends. Some of them had worse problems than mine."

"It's good to hear you say that, Mrs. Bennett."

She got up and walked confidently down the hall.

Tonight she'd call Betty with the good news. They were letting her use the public telephone now. She could even go down to the gift shop alone with a pass.

"Goodbye, Yvonne," she smiled to her roommate. Yvonne was leaving the hospital today for Halfway House. Tonight she'd have a new roommate, another victim of the "tornado ward."

Sometimes a roommate hugged you, sometimes she cried all the time. Sometimes she'd shout or babble. The ones who seemed to be the worst were those who sat in stony silence.

Ingrid saw the chaplain at the end of the corridor. He was talking to a patient. "I wish he would talk to me," she thought, "I've got so much to tell him."

Maybe this evening she'd tell the nurse she finally wanted to talk to him.

She sat down and looked at the cigar box she had converted into a jewelry box.

"It's not bad," she said to herself, "I made a belt, too. I cooked and I fixed my hair. I even exercised on the exercycle. That was fun."

Her gaze fell on the wax roses Betty had given her.

She had torn off some of the petals during a bad mood.

"Broken flowers," she thought, "but they're still kind of pretty."

They looked like the people in the psychiatric ward. Broken flowers.

Tomorrow she decided to talk to the chaplain for sure. She had an important question to ask him.

Marion Schoeberlein lives in Elmhurst, Ill.

Early missions to China:

Is there a lesson for native Indians ministry?

Bert Den Boggende

In the May 22 "Two Over 65" column, Mary VanderVennen wondered how Chinese history might have been different if an unnamed Catholic priest in the early 1400 or 1500s could have stayed in China and worked with church support.

Mary probably had Matteo Ricci and the so-called Chinese Rites Controversy in mind. But Ricci (1562-1610) was not the first missionary with some success in China; rather, he could be regarded as the initiator or father of the third phase.

With the rise of the Mongol empire, there were renewed missionary efforts. Kublai Khan's mother, for instance, was a Nestorian Christian.

It seems worthwhile to explore these first three phases somewhat further, not just to put Mary's speculation in perspective, but to grasp a little bit the difficulties of "missionizing" a highly cultured society.

An early presence

Legend has it that the Apostle Thomas introduced Christ to China; there is, however, not a shred of evidence to sustain the legend. The first known appearance of Christianity dates from 635, when the Syrian Alopen introduced the Nestorian form of Christianity (Nestorianism holds to the distinct separation between the humanity and divinity of Christ, a teaching at variance with Article 19 of the *Belgic Confession*).

According to a tablet of 781, Alopen was honorably welcomed by Emperor T'ai Tsung, a Confucian monarch who restored order after much civil unrest. Alopen was given permission to build a monastery, translate Scripture and preach. In spite of these favorable conditions, Christianity did not become popular.

A Christian document found in 1908 near the western Chinese border has a Buddhist flavor, suggesting that Chinese Nestorianism may have adopted some non-Christian ideas. If this is indeed the case, then we have here a similarity with the Rites Controversy of several centuries later. At any rate, its monastic similarity to Buddhism contributed to the decline of Nestorianism.

In 845, Emperor Wu Tsung ordered the closure of Buddhist monasteries and his decree applied to Nestorian monasteries as well: "As for the foreign Bonzes [monks] who came here to make known the Law which is current in their kingdom, there are about 3000 of them ... my command is that they also return to the world, so that in the customs of our Empire there be no mixture...." A Catholic monk reported in 987 that he and his companions could find no trace of Christianity.

Renewed efforts

The second phase of Christianizing China began around the time of Marco Polo. Traveling from Beijing to Amoy in the south, the Venetian entrepreneur stated in his travelogue that around 1278 the Nestorian Christian Mar Sergius, who governed in the city of Chin-Kiang-Fu for three years in the name of the Great Khan, allowed two Nestorian churches to be built.

How trustworthy Marco Polo's travelogue is, is another matter, but there can be no doubt that with the rise of the Mongol empire there were renewed missionary efforts. Nestorians were again involved. Kublai Khan's mother, for instance, was a Nestorian Christian.

Although most Nestorians were non-Chinese and lived in cities, they were so important that a government bureau was established to supervise their monasteries and rites.

Now also Catholics tried to evangelize the Chinese. Most notable was the Franciscan John of Monte Corvino, who came to Beijing in 1294. He was able to convert a Nestorian prince to Western Orthodoxy, but his claim that he converted 6,000 people should be taken with a grain of salt.

John, who translated the New Testament and the Psalter, became Archbishop in 1307. At his death in 1328, Christians and pagans devoutly laid hold of pieces of the clothing of the Archbishop and carried them off as relics with great reverence.

After his death, mission efforts declined. Essentially Christianity was associated with the Mongol conquerors and when the Mongols were expelled from China in 1368 Christianity also lost its influence.

JENNY WEAVER LENSMAN

The success of missionaries in China has depended, at least partly, on accepting much of the existing culture.

Ricci's efforts

Under renewed persecution, Christianity disappeared again.

It was not until about 1600 that the third phase of Christianizing China began. A few attempts had been made before (for instance, by Francis Xavier) but without results. The key figure in the renewed attempt was the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1562-1610).

In 1582 he arrived at Macao, a Portuguese colony at the entrance to the bay before Canton. There he started to learn Chinese. The next year he moved to a town west of Canton, building a mission house in a rather hostile environment. But if he wanted to proclaim the gospel freely, he needed permission from the emperor in Beijing.

According to the historian Daniel J. Boortin's fascinating book *The Discovers*, Emperor Wan-Li was "a pathological recluse [who] had imprisoned himself inside ... the Forbidden City, with his wives and scores of concubines, attended by uncounted eunuchs. Even his highest officials seldom saw him, and had to send messages by the palace eunuchs." Not surprisingly, it took a long time before Ricci was allowed within the Forbidden City.

In fact, when he approached Beijing in 1600, he was imprisoned for six months. Somehow the Emperor was still willing to receive his gifts, which included two clocks, a large one driven by weights and a small one driven by a spring. Although the clocks were not the first ones in China, as Ricci claimed, they nevertheless delighted the emperor.

Ricci, who had to do some repairs on the clocks, gained the Emperor's favor through his scholarship and knowledge of Chinese culture. Staying in Beijing until his death in 1610 he was able to start a nucleus of a Christian church.

The Rites Controversy

Significantly, Ricci adopted Chinese culture, going as far as accepting Confucian ceremonies in honor of ancestors as compatible with Christianity. His syncretistic approach became the basis for a long-lasting dispute in the Catholic Church, referred to as the Chinese Rites Controversy. Dominicans and Franciscans, jealous of the Jesuits' success, argued that these Confucian rites were a religious superstition and a compromise with paganism.

A century after Ricci's death the Pope concluded that these rites were indeed incompatible with Christian teachings and way of life. Up to that time missionary efforts had been reasonably successful in spite of some severe persecution shortly after Ricci's death. But with the rejection of the Chinese rites came also the Emperor's banishment of missionaries as well as persecution for the circa 250,000 Christians.

With the help of Western technology, knowledge of astronomy and a willingness to accept much of Chinese culture, missionaries were able to gain the esteem of the Emperor and the intelligentsia. Ricci's method was promising; but also fraught with danger. Christianity could become elitist and syncretistic.

Significantly, and in spite of the persecutions, when the missionaries returned in the nineteenth century, there were perhaps still 200,000 Christians in China. The fourth phase did therefore not have to start totally anew. What was new, however, was the involvement of Protestant missionaries — but that is another story.

Where to draw the line?

Two problem areas may be emphasized here. Out of necessity, missionaries needed the support of the rulers. As a consequence, Christianity became mostly associated with the elite and the conquerors. Is there a message here for evangelizing native Indians?

The success of the missionaries depended, at least partly, on accepting much of the existing culture. But there is a fine line between accepting that culture and making Christianity syncretistic. Where does one draw the line when one evangelizes aboriginal peoples?

Is John Stellingwerff's ministry at the Edmonton Native Healing Centre the Christian Reformed 20th century equivalent to Matteo Ricci's? Proponents and opponents, before creating our own Native Indian Rites Controversy, would do well to learn from the early missionary efforts to China.

Bert den Boggende lives in Lacombe, Alta.

Two weeks that were

Bert Hielema

LET ME START WITH good news. It comes from Berkeley, Calif., the birthplace of hippiedom. This university town hosted a conference last month at which cosmologists discussed the theological implications of their work. Translated, this means that people who make it their job to look at the universe as a whole started to talk about God and discussed whether he had anything to do with the world as we see it around and above us.

Allen Sandage, one of the world's leading astronomers, told the gathering that contemplating the majesty of the universe helped to make him a believer in God, willing to accept that creation could only be explained as a "miracle." Not long ago such a statement from an establishment scientist would have been shocking, but today intellectuals are beginning to find it respectable. The theological idea of creation *ex nihilo* — out of nothing — is becoming more and more accepted, even in secular university circles. This also means, I think, that an important part of the evolution theory is up for grabs.

ON ANOTHER religious note: some busy (and rich) Americans do not want to waste their precious time meditating about their place in the universe and are hiring "spiritual directors" to do that for them. Just as these people have a money manager for their investment portfolios, so they have a trained person to take care of their spirits.

The current material welfare and the bulging stock market appear only to have deepened the spiritual malaise of our time: "There's got to be more to life than this," say these people, and they start consulting so-called experts at $50/session to bring comfort for the soul. Church officials are looking at this trend with a wary eye and call it a "slippery slope," also because it by-passes the church.

The shortage of priests in the Catholic Church is a factor. This has left parishioners feeling neglected. I, too, am suspicious of this trend which treats religion as an add-on ingredient, a bit of Jesus sprinkled on the toast of the rest of life.

LAST WEEK I followed my own advice and did something I've never done before: on a whim, I bought a Sunday *Toronto Star*. I saw its slender form and assumed that this would mean little advertising and lots of reading, and my hunch was correct. I read Dalton Camp's column, a man whose opinion I learned to value a long time ago when I listened to him, Eric Kierans and Stephen Lewis every Tuesday morning on CBC's *Morningside*.

In his column, "Farewell to the Idea of Nation-State," he wrote, quoting a professor of information systems at the London School of Economics: "The world as we know it is changing: it may even be moving in reverse." He then goes on to describe how our national governments are becoming powerless to deal with global enterprises and worldwide trade agreements negotiated for their benefit.

Companies such as IBM, GE, GM, Ford and Shell often declare their profits in low-tax countries while operating in high-tax countries. These legal tax evasions polarize the world into two camps: the intellectual, cultural and business elite, with their often preferred tax status; and the unfortunate rest, the immobile and dependent service workers whose jobs may well be on the line in the next recession, as more and more "labor-saving" machinery designed and serviced by the elite make these lower laborers superfluous, throwing them into the lap of the governments to whom the rich — corporations and white collar workers — contribute less and less.

All this is bad news: capitalism, wrote Camp, is killing democracy. People in the know *know* it and are smart enough not to mention it. As for being Canadian or American or Dutch in the new world order, this British professor says: Forget it. "Those who wrap themselves in the flag can soon expect to be buried in it."

ONE HUNDRED YEARS ago, more than half the world's population had no clue that the Western world was entering a new century: China calculated its time since the start of the emperor's reign; the Muslim world was 700 years behind the Christian calender; according to Jewish calculations it was the year 5661; and Russia was still stuck with the Julian calendar which was not in tune with our Gregorian year count.

One hundred years ago people in the Western world celebrated the promise of universal renovation: infectious germ-causing diseases were retreating, thanks to better hygiene, so people had real hope for a longer and better life. They were optimistic about the advances in science and technology, especially the advent of the miraculous self-propelled carriage. "Little did they realize that in the coming century 25 million people would be killed by these vehicles alone, while wars and genocides would cause more than double that number of fatalities.

And the bugs? They are still here, getting ever more powerful, with the miracles drugs proving less and less effective.

***TIME* MAGAZINE** this past week featured two modern developments on its cover: first, "The Killer Germ." It's turning up everywhere: in your water, your food, the pool. How to protect yourself from E. Coli. Just after that issue the entire city of Sydney, Australia, population four million, had to shut down its water supply due to contamination. Each year some 9000 people die of food poisoning, which has increased so much because we import food and produce it from far away nations where sanitary conditions are not as good as in your veggie patch.

The long term effects of globalization not only will kill democracy but, like any drug, has bad side affects: global sickness-sharing.

THE OTHER SCARY news item in *Time* was related, because global warming is not only breeding new diseases but is causing the melting of the polar ice caps. A *Time* reporter visited the Canadian icebreaker *Des Grosseilliers* on which some 100 scientists are probing the Arctic, where the ice has been shrinking two to three per cent a decade since 1970. The rate is even higher in the Antarctic, where the Pine Island Glacier is breaking up rapidly.

The extra water released may have disastrous consequences for the sea levels, and may well threaten such low-lying countries as the Netherlands and Bangladesh. Some scientists talk about a six-meter rise in 50 years!

AS THE MILLENNIUM approaches, it seems to me that anxiety about the new era on the horizon is increasing, quite a contrast with 100 years ago. From my grade school years I remember that in 1898 Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands started her reign at the tender age of 18; Queen Victoria was still in power in Great Britain; the Boer War was about to erupt; and my father was born in that year.

Bert Hielema views the world from his rural abode in Tweed, Ont., and each day counts his blessings.

P.S.

I did not mention Bill Clinton. I hope and pray that this time he the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Then and only then God will help him. If not, watch out.

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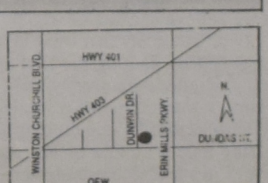

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Comment

Suffering in a pain-avoiding world

Dear Elizabeth,

I have a theological question for you today. Without becoming too wistful, I sometimes think back to my "younger days" when I seemed much more confident about what great things we can expect from God in our lives. Trusting in God and his commandments was a definite guarantee of a safe, happy, successful life. Psalm 37:4 is pretty unambiguous: "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." Having the loving Creator of the Universe on your side, so to speak, comes with obvious advantages.

Now after having been a campus minister for a few years, and having to deal with some personal struggles, too, my bravado has diminished somewhat. For example, one faithful Christian student is now undergoing treatment for leukemia, and another Christian student's father is divorcing for the second time. The conclusion of Psalm 88 seems more appropriate here: "You have taken my companions and loved ones from me; the darkness is my closest friend."

The glib promises of the exuberant faith healer and the smarmy assurances of the smiling evangelist seem nothing short of betrayal at times like this. But I don't want to minimize the surprising reality of God's grace in the world, either.

What can we expect from our God? Does "membership" have any "privileges" (as the Christian Reformed liturgy for profession of faith alludes)?

Peter

✉ ✉ ✉

Dear Peter,

I don't really know what to say in response. Theologians have been discussing the Problem of Evil for centuries. Who are we to add anything to that debate? I will say, however, that there isn't anything I've read or heard that has helped make it any easier to accept. In fact, I think the last book I tried to read that tried to answer why Christians suffer I threw across the room in disgust. It's all very well to talk about character-building and strengthening faith, but it doesn't make the pain go away. And it certainly doesn't answer "Why?"

But I also don't think I've ever expected that faith would give me an inside edge on God's grace in this regard. Did you, honestly, in your "younger" days? Because I'd have to ask you, then: whatever gave you that idea? The story of the expulsion from the Garden of Eden is the first one we're taught in Sunday school. If that paradise didn't last, what made you think you had dibs on one while still here on this earth?

Elizabeth

✉ ✉ ✉

Elizabeth,

I wasn't asking for paradise. I was just hoping for something beyond a stoic acceptance of the weary status quo. There are many clear promises in the Bible concerning God's gifts to his children. The danger with expecting great things from God is that you risk being disappointed. But if you have minimal expectations from God, and high expectations regarding the misery in the world, you'll never be disappointed. To the contrary, you risk surprise.

You know, this fits in with our "younger generation" discussions. I think our generation risks surprise much more than disappointment with regards to God and his grace.

P.

✉ ✉ ✉

Peter,

Well, okay, not paradise. But the desires of the heart — what is that? Does it not mean dreams as big as one can dream? And leukemia and divorce are certainly not dreams; rather, nightmares.

Disappointment is the most selfish word in the English language, I've always thought. It's all about what we want. Maybe we're looking at this question the wrong way. Do we believe in God for what he gives us? Or do we believe because of who he is?

I once asked my dad what he thought was the meaning of life, and he responded by quoting the first answer of the *Westminster Confession,* which, I hope I'm remembering correctly, says "to know God and enjoy him forever." I thought to myself, what a fabulous word: *enjoy.* Isn't saying you enjoy someone acknowledging the highest form of communion? You take delight simply in being with that person, in sharing time with him or her, and time is one of the most precious commodities we have. I'm starting to ramble here, but I guess I'm saying that "membership" with God *is* the privilege. Not anything he promises us or gives us.

E.

Two under 35

Peter Schuurman **Elizabeth Salomons**

Elizabeth,

I like how you put that. I guess I always assumed that if you weren't expecting big things from God, your faith was somehow lacking. God is great, and he does great things. To think anything less is to belittle him.

But maybe his greatness includes a willingness to be weak, too — a willingness to wait, to watch and even to waiver, at times? Christ's death on the cross testifies that God is more than just sheer power. Our response, then, is — must be — one of trust, with the expectation that he is weaving together something more wonderful than we could ever imagine. Trusting is, in a sense, waiting hopefully. And in the midst of leukemia and divorce, that is certainly a challenge. And a comfort, I hope.

P.

✉ ✉ ✉

Peter,

YES! Trusting and hoping and waiting — faith is meaningless without any of these. But in our results-based, schedule-oriented age of instant gratification, who knows how to wait? Who *wants* to wait?

E.

✉ ✉ ✉

Elizabeth,

You're right. Instant coffee; instant pain relievers; instant cash; fast food....

And you know, I just realized something. The wording of my initial question probably comes more directly from a Club Med ad that declares "Membership has its Privileges" than it does from the CRC form for profession of faith.

Maybe your remark about paradise wasn't too far off. Maybe these expectations of God are too easily shaped by a therapeutic consumer culture.

I mentioned this discussion to a fellow campus minister, a Presbyterian. He said that the question isn't "What can I get from God?" but rather: "In what way can I serve him?" Perhaps my initial question was not the best question.

Peter

✉ ✉ ✉

Peter,

Ugh. I draw the line at instant coffee. But it is difficult to remain indifferent to or unaffected by the influences around us, which can't help but affect what we expect from ourselves, from others, and from God.

We're out of room, Peter, and I don't really know how to end this. Which is probably a sign that your question's a good one — it's the good ones that make us ask more questions.

Patiently,
Elizabeth

Elizabeth Salomons is a freelance editor who lives in Toronto and is a member of First CRC there. Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed Church's chaplain at Brock University. He's a member of Jubilee CRC in St. Catharines.

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* include billing address
* include contact person with phonenumber.
Thank you.

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Classified Rates

(Revised February 1, 1995)

Births	$25.00
Marriages & Engagements	$40.00
Anniversaries	$45.00
2-column anniversaries	$90.00
Obituaries	$45.00
Notes of thanks	$35.00
Birthdays	$40.00

All other one-column classified advertisements: $15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $15.00. Letter under file number $35.00 extra. Photos: $25.00 additional charge.

Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive

ATTENTION!

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. *Christian Courier* reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS

We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.

Christian Courier
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Phone: (905) 682-8311
Fax: (905) 682-8313

E-mail: ccadverts@aol.com

Adoption

My husband and I are a young, fun-loving, warm-hearted, **Christian couple who would like to adopt a newborn baby** into our home and our lives. If you have considered adoption for your baby please call us so that we can meet. We may be able to help each other.

Glenda and Rene De Vries
(416) 690-5374.

Thank You

BROUWER:

We were very much touched and deeply honored with the overwhelming amount of flowers, cards and other expressions of your love at our 50th wedding anniversary. Thank you very much!

Jacques (Jack) and
Lenie (Helen) Brouwer
Scarborough, Ont.

Births

McLARDY:

Don and Liz (nee Vanderbyl) are happy to announce that God has blessed us with another healthy child.

RAQUEL CARLEEN

was born at home on Sunday, June 21, 1998, weighing 9 lbs., 15 oz. Raquel is another sister for Becky, Heidi, Alisha, Melia, Joshua, Kristy and Denae. She is the 11th grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. William Vanderbyl of Peterborough, Ont., and the eighth grandchild for Mrs. Lillian McLardy and the late Mr. Joseph McLardy of Toronto, Ont.

Home address:
R.R. #3, Cookstown, ON L0L 1L0

Anniversaries

1958 August 29 1998

Your Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

JACK and ALICE
HIELEMA
(nee NICOLAI)

celebrating 40 years of blessing in marriage.

Papa and Mom, we thank the Lord for you. We are blessed. We continually lift you up before Him on the wings of prayer.

He loves you! We love you!

Your children and grandchildren,
Chris & Anna vanHaastert-Hielema — Rimbey, Alta.
Jos, Alysa, Maia, Kailan
Maurice Masse & Muriel Hielema — Gray Creek, B.C.
Shyam, Quinn
Richard & Jacky King-Hielema — Houston, B.C.
Nicolai
Stan & Monica Hielema — Calgary, Alta.
Charissa, James

Home address: 6872 O'Grady, SS2, Site 17, Comp. 27, Prince George, BC V2N 2K6

Personal

ONE TO ANOTHER

Christian companion magazine.
Hundreds of readers Canada-wide.
Single issue $5.
Write to:
#12 923 2nd Ave. S.
Lethbridge, AB T1J 0C7

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Henry and Lammie Rumph on their 50th wedding anniversary!

Ruinerwold Smithville
Dr., the Neth. Ont.
1948 August 29 1998

With praise and thankfulness to our Lord, we hope to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents

HENRY and LAMMIE
RUMPH
(nee STEENBERGEN)

We thank the Lord for all the care and blessings He has provided and pray that He will continue to bless and keep you in His loving care.

With love from your family:
Mary & John De Weerd — Alma, Ont.
Julie & Elden & Carly,
Mike & Tracy, Steve & Judy, Robert
Cindy & Henry Bloemberg — Drayton, Ont.
Lance & Cheryl, Mark & Kelly, Richard & Erin
Albert & JoAnne Rumph — Grimsby, Ont.
Debbi
Janet & Harold Janssen — Beamsville, Ont.
Christy, Dan, Brenda
Irene & Art Dreyer — Grimsby, Ont.
Kerry & Melissa, Tim, Jason, Jeff
Helen & Arnold Eising — Jarvis, Ont.
Melanie, Shari Lynn, Karina
Brian & Tina Rumph — Harriston, Ont.
Victoria, Brandon, Laura

There will be an open house on Saturday, Aug. 29, 1998, from 2-4 p.m., at Smithville Covenant Chr. School, 6470 Regional Road #14, Smithville, Ont.

Home address: Station St., Box 377, Smithville, ON L0R 2P0

1963 August 14 1998

"The Lord is my Shepherd" (Ps.23).

We thank God for blessing our parents with 35 years of marriage.

HENK and LIZ NIENHUIS
(nee LOF)

We love you Mom and Dad, Oma and Opa. You have been a blessing to all of our lives. You have shared our joys and our sorrows and consistently remained faithful to our heavenly Father.

What a wonderful Christian example you have been to us and others around you. Congratulations on 35 years of marriage. We pray that you will be blessed with many more years together.

Your children and grandchildren,
Peggy & Kevin Smit — Kirkland, Wash.
Elizabeth, Joshua, Kyle
Wilma & Ken Rauwerda — Chatham, Ont.
Kenny
Peter Nienhuis & Katie MacLeod — Victoria, B.C.

Home address: 489 Treanor Avenue, Victoria, BC V9B 3H2

For Rent

For rent in quiet Christian home in Dundas-area, **bachelor apartment,** furnished if you like. 18 km to McMaster. No smoking. Rent $395, hydro and heat incl.

Phone (905) 659-7075.

Rotterdam, the Netherlands
1948 - 1998

With joy and thankfulness to the Lord, we hope to celebrate with our parents

WILLEM and MINKE POMP
(nee VAN MARRUM)

the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary on Aug. 18, 1998.

We pray that the Lord will bless them for many more years to come.

With love from their children and grandchildren:
John & Floretta
Bill, Michelle, Michael
Susan & Jaap
Joost, Nancy
Koos & Laney
Kelly, Wilko
Coby & Jim
Sarah, Michael, Erik
Sylvia & David

There will be an open house in the Covenant Chr. Ref. Church, 410 Landsdowne Ave., Woodstock, Ont., on Saturday, Aug. 22, 1998, from 3-5 p.m.

Home address: 329 Brompton Ave., Woodstock, ON N4S 5Z4

1948 September 2 1998

Psalm 139

The children and grandchildren of

CHRIS and KATIE RUPKE

join with our parents in thanking and praising God for giving them 50 years of marriage.

Thank you Dad and Mom for giving us a living example of growing in grace, and living before God's face in times of joy and sorrow. Your faithfulness to God, each other and to all of us are a powerful example and an inspiration.

Patricia & Ton
Joel
Ron & Margaret
Roxanne & Jim, Mark & Sharon, David, James, Paul
Dan & Mary
Rachel, Natasha, Naomi, Rebecca
Judy & John
Christopher, Brandon
Mark & Wilma
Zachariah, Berendina

All friends and relatives are invited to join with us in celebrating this milestone in Dad and Mom's life at an open house on Saturday, Sept. 5, 1998, from 2 to 5 p.m., in the Senior Citizens' building in Holland Marsh, Ont.

Best wishes only.

Address: 10 Kitching Dr., Holland Landing, ON L9N 1K8

Classifieds

Anniversaries

Toronto Orangeville
1953 August 29 1998

With thankfulness and praise to God we announce the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

SIDNEY and TONI RYZEBOL
(nee MEYER)

Wedding text: "and you will be a blessing" (Gen.12:2b).
We thank them for their love, support and the blessing that they have been to us, and for the guidance they have shown to us and others. We pray to the Lord that He will bless you for many more years with good health and His special love.
Congratulations and love from your children and grandchildren:
Anda & Dennis DeJong — Toronto
Antonia, Rejeanne
Ben & Teresa Ryzebol — Orangeville
Derek, Rudy, Tara, Sidney
Peter Ryzebol — Orangeville
Brant & Janet Ryzebol — Orangeville
Reuben, Kiana, Lucas
We hope to celebrate this on Aug. 30, 1998, after the 10 a.m. church service at the Orangeville Chr. Ref. Church, with a luncheon at 1 p.m. for family and friends.
Home address: R.R. 7, Orangeville, ON L9W 2Z3

1973 1998

With great joy and thankfulness to God

KEITH and CINDY WOUDSTRA
(LAUDER)

will be celebrating 25 years of marriage this Aug. 26.
We trust that God will continue to watch over them and bless them in the years to come.
Thank you Mom and Dad for the love you have shown us and the guidance you have given us. Thank you for setting the example of a healthy and happy marriage for us.
Congratulations from your loving sons,
Matthew and Christopher.
Home address: R.R. #3, Milton, ON L9T 2X7

For Rent

Students, are you planning to study in **London, Ont.**, next year (University of Western Ontario or Fanshawe College) and needing a place to stay? We offer housing that is close to both institutions and would welcome inquiries. Please feel free to contact us by phone: **(519) 660-0922** evenings, **(519) 672-9217** days, fax: **(519) 672-3140** or e-mail: **talsma@skyia.com**

Obituaries

On Lord's Day, July 19, 1998, God called home our dear brother-in-law

JOHN DE VRIES

at the age of almost 67 years.
Beloved husband of Sylvia (Zandstra), wonderful father to six children and their spouses and loving grandfather of eight grandchildren.
May the Lord of all comfort and grace sustain them in this time of sadness.
"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live" (John 11:25).
We mourn his passing, and he will be missed by all.
Lovingly remembered by:
Mom Zandstra
Mary & Jack
Hilbert & Dora
Shirley & Ron
Bill & Emmy
Margaret & Clarence
Greta & John
Jane & Gil
Wilma & Hans
Rose & James
Dick & Evelyn
Correspondence address:
Sylvia De Vries, R.R. #7, Brighton, ON K0K 1H0

On July 30, 1998, our Lord called home his child

JAN (JOHN) KORVEMAKER

in his 74th year.
Beloved husband of Tjaaktje (Jackie) (DeGroot) Korvemaker.
Loving father and Opa of:
Alice & Mark Oosting — Grand Rapids, Mich.
Tara, Jessica, Brooke, Andrea
Ties & Connie Korvemaker — Sarnia, Ont.
Tyson, Kyle
Olga & Bill DePooter — Port Lambton, Ont.
Paul, Kelcy, Darcie
Wilma Korvemaker — Port Lambton, Ont.
Jim & Sandy Korvemaker — London, Ont.
Gabriella
The late Roelf Korvemaker (1958).
Brother of Annie Zegers, Willie and Hennie Korvemaker, Lammie & Joop Poortman and Lucky Westera, all of the Netherlands, Okko and Lies Korvemaker of Parksville, B.C.
He is survived by many brothers and sisters-in-law and nieces and nephews in the Netherlands.
The funeral service was held on Monday, Aug. 3, 1998, at the Chr. Ref. Church, Wallaceburg, Ont., with Pastor Richard VanderVaart leading the service.
Interment followed at Riverview Cemetery, Wallaceburg.
"Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands" (2 Cor. 5:1).
Address: 506 Moore St.,
Port Lambton, ON N0P 2B0

Obituaries

Rinzumageest Whitby
Fr., the Neth. Ont.
April 3, 1917 - July 22, 1998

TJEERD (TED) RINTJEMA

went to be with His Lord, after a struggle with cancer. His desire to be with Jesus was fulfilled on Wednesday, July 22, 1998.
Dear husband of Janny.
Predeceased by his infant daughter Jeanetta Anne Karstine.
The funeral service was held on July 25, 1998, at the Hebron Chr. Ref. Church, Whitby, Ont., Pastor Bernie Bakker officiating.
"Sing to the Lord, for He has done glorious things; Let this be known to all the world" (Is. 12:5).
Correspondence address:
Janny Rintjema, 831 Centre N., Whitby, ON L1N 4T9

"Lord, you have been our refuge from generation to generation" (Ps.90:1).
In full confidence in her Lord and Savior our dear mother, grandmother and great-grand-mother

RINSKE ROMKEMA-DEJONG
(nee VANDERPLOEG)

passed away on July 25, 1998.
She was an exemplary immigrant wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, aunt and friend whose simple, strong faith in the Lord was evident in all she did. Her life was service.
Cor & Hetty Romkema — Burlington, Ont.
Miep & Phil Jager — Clarkson, Ont.
Allan & Clary Romkema — Woodbridge, Ont.
Albert & Liz Romkema — Willowdale, Ont.
Christine & Henk Aay — Grand Rapids, Mich.
16 grandchildren and 23 great-grand-children.
Nephews:
Dirk & Aukje Romkema — Woodbridge, Ont.
Hielke & Gertje Vanderploeg — Barrie, Ont.

Miscellaneous

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Job Opportunities

Christian Courier
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Salary commensurate with experience.
Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

Fax your letter of application, resume and two references to **(905) 682-8313, attention: Bert Witvoet, Editor.**

Redeemer Christian High School (Ottawa) is seeking a

PRINCIPAL

Redeemer Chr. High School, located in Canada's beautiful capital, is seeking a teaching principal for its 120 students in grades 9-OAC, effective August 1999.
We are looking for a leader and motivator of people, with experience in a growing Christian high school. Strong relationship-building skills are necessary to nurture a staff of 10 full-time and part-time teachers, and an interdenominational student body. We are looking for someone with a strong vision for the progressive development of the only Christian high school in the Ottawa region.
Our one-year-old campus offers tremendous room for expansion of our programs and growth in our student population. Compensation will be based on an administrative factor, a generous benefits and professional development package and a personal retirement savings program.

Please send a letter of application by **Sept. 30, 1998**, along with your resume and a statement of vision of Christian education to:
Cora Beking, RCHS Search Committee Chair, R.R. #1, Oxford Station, ON K0G 1T0.
Phone: (613) 258-5396. E-mail: beking_jc@msn.com

For Sale

For Sale

The Past, Present and Potential Future of the Ministry Share System

A 160-page study of denominational funding in the CRC by Rev. Jerry Zandstra. For a copy, please send a cheque for $12 (U.S.) or $15 (Can.) to: **Jerry Zandstra, 1901 Pokogon SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506.** Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

Classifieds

Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Call declined:
— Rehoboth, Bowmanville, Ont., **Rev. Peter Hoytema** of Ancaster, Ont.

Calls accepted:
— Midland Park, N.J., **Rev. Peter Hoytema** of Ancaster, Ont.
— St. Albert, Alta., **Rev. John Luth** of Barrie, Ont.
— New Life, Red Deer, Alta., **Rev. Gilbert Kamps** of Scottsdale, Az.
— Vernon, B.C., **Candidate Wm. J. Kempkes**.
— Hanley, Grandville, Mich., **Rev. Craig R. Cunningham** of Vanastra, Ont.

New name:
— First CRC of Drayton, Ont., is now known as the Chr. Ref. Church of Drayton, Ont.

Change in time of service:
— **First CRC, Vancouver, B.C.**, will now hold their morning service at **10 a.m.** until further notice.

New clerk:
— For Immanuel CRC, Hamilton, Ont., **Mr. Ray De Vries**, 186 Jerseyville Rd. W., Ancaster, ON L9G 3K7; Phone (905) 648-0135.

Classis meeting:
— **Classis Eastern Canada** will meet, D.V., on **Oct. 23 and 24, 1998**, in the Kanata Community CRC, Kanata, Ont. All materials for the printed agenda are due before Sept. 8, 1998.
James Kooistra, S.C.

Miscellaneous

Celebrating 23 years of service.

The CCEF supports the cost of developing Christian textbooks for your local school.

Your financial support will help us in our publishing program. Your gifts are tax deductible.

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day or evening.

Events

University and College Students arriving in London, Ont.

You are invited to a **special worship service** to welcome new and returning students at **First Chr. Ref. Church, 513 Talbot St., London, Ont.**, at **11 a.m.**, on **Sunday, Sept. 13, 1998.** Refreshments and introduction to student activities to follow.

The first meeting of the Cornerstone Student Fellowship will take place on **Wednesday, Sept. 16, 1998**, at **511 Coombs Ave., London, Ont**. Please come!

For more information, call Chaplain **Michael Veeneman** at **(519) 438-1242.**

Job Opportunities

The **Board of Seaway Ministry of Classes Eastern Canada and Quinte** invites applicants for a

CHAPLAIN TO SEAFARERS

position in **Montreal harbor**. Must have a heart for evangelism and gifts in cross-cultural ministry. Facility with languages a plus. Responsibilities include presenting the gospel to seafarers, through visiting ships, engaging in spiritual conversation at the Centre, leading in public worship and devotions, and promoting the ministry among the churches. Chaplain must work well with staff and volunteers. Ordination and ministry experience are assets. **Contact Rev. Charles Kooger, P.O. Box 520, Frankford, ON K0K 2C0, (613) 398-7681 or ckooger@reach.net by Aug. 31, 1998.**

Brampton Second Chr. Ref. Church seeks a
Part-time Pastoral Care Worker
for the congregation, ordained or un-ordained. If interested in the complete job description, please write to the Clerk of Council, **Mr. Jim Visser, at 3 Trotters Lane, Brampton, ON L6Y1B5.**

Thank You

Heartfelt Thanks!

To all members of the churches of Classis Hamilton and the McMaster Campus Committee a heartfelt thanks for allowing me to serve God and you as campus pastor at McMaster University for almost 18 years. Thank you for your faithful support, prayers and care, and for your renewed commitment to continue with the campus ministry.

A special word of gratitude to **First Church**. You accepted and welcomed me in your midst and cared for me in a loving way. I will miss you, but never forget your warmth. God bless you!
With love and deep appreciation, yours, **Aren P. Geisterfer.**

Events

College and University Students

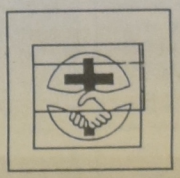
Join us when you are in Guelph, Ont.

New Life Chr. Ref. Church
invites you to their worship service and a welcoming lunch afterwards on **Sept. 13, 1998, 10:30 a.m.,**
400 Victoria Rd. N., Guelph, Ont.

Immanuel Christian Fellowship
Join us in our weekly meetings at 5:30 p.m., in University Centre room 332 starting Sept. 16.

Huron Campus Ministry
offers excellent programs on campus.
Contact: Rev. Ed Den Haan (519) 824-4120, ext. 2392
edenhaan@uoguelph.ca

Through God's Spirit, we grow together in Christ.



Huron Campus Ministry Of Waterloo
Classis Huron

The Church in the Woods
Waterloo Christian Reformed Church
warmly invites all Waterloo area students, their parents and friends, to a
Student Welcome Service
Sunday, Sept. 13, 1998, at 10:30 a.m.

After the service, information about Huron Campus Ministry, Grace Chr. Fellowship at the University of Waterloo and the Wilfrid Laurier Group will be presented and an excellent luncheon provided.

Please contact **Chaplain Graham E. Morbey** at **(519) 886-1474 or (519) 884-1970, ext. 2739** for further information and assistance.
The Waterloo Christian Reformed Church is located at **209 Bearinger Road, Waterloo, Ont.**

Retirement
Rev. Aren P. Geisterfer

The McMaster University Campus Chaplaincy Committee invites friends and supporters to a **Retirement Open House** for **Rev. Aren P. Geisterfer** in celebration of his faithful service in ministry and to wish him farewell as he moves to Quebec in September.
Join us for an informal evening at **Immanuel Chr. Ref. Church, Hamilton**, Ont., on Friday, **Aug. 28, 1998**, anytime between 7 and 10 p.m. (Immanuel is located at the corner of Mohawk Road and West 5th St., on the Hamilton Mountain). **Info.: (905) 526-7519.**

Classifieds

Events

Wellandport Christian School

will celebrate 40 years of Christ-centred education on **Sept. 25,1998.** A fellowship barbecue, open house, and thanksgiving program will be held from 4-10 p.m. All former students, teachers, supporters and committee members are invited. We count you among the many blessings God has given us during these 40 years. Contact the school at **(905) 386-6272** for more details.

Miscellaneous

Rates to September 30, 1998

RRSP	Regular Fund
Approx. 5.0%	4.95%

Your funds will be invested in Christian Reformed Church and Christian school building projects in Canada.

CRC EXTENSION FUND

Fax: (416) 465-6367
Call: (416) 461-1207 evenings or write:
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45 Harriet St., Toronto, ON M4L 2G1

Miscellaneous

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Joan and Mike Havinga
(905) 358-3534. E-mail:
mhavinga@freenet.npiec.on.ca

Events

1963 - 1998
35th Anniversary
of
Brantford Christian School
7 Calvin St., Brantford, Ont.
Monday, Sept. 14, 1998
9:00 — 9:45 a.m.
Everyone is welcome to attend our celebration!

Miscellaneous

Christian Courier is throwing caution to the wind and extending a special introductory subscription to people under 40. You may be a newlywed, a student, a single person or a couple with or without kids. As long as you are somewhere between adolescence and middle age, you may subscribe at the ridiculously low price of

$23.50 (GST incl.)

Parents: Are your grown-up kids subscribing? If not, why not surprise them with a gift subscription at this low price — 46% below the regular value!

This exceptional offer has been made possible partly through the generosity of a group of friends who believe that the Reformed perspective needs to be kept alive among young Christians. The discounted price applies only to persons who have not subscribed before. Act now! The offer is limited to the first 200 new subscribers. Send us the complete coupon and a $23.50 cheque soon.

Wouldn't you be happy with our offer?

COUPON COUPON

Please enter my subscription for one year immediately.
I enclose a cheque for $23.50, payable to Christian Courier.

Name

Address

City/Town Code

Events

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

Aug. 22-28 The Ambassadors Male Chorus Maritime Tour of Concerts. **Aug. 22**: 8 p.m., CRC, **Williamsburg**, Ont.; **Aug. 26**: 7:30 p.m., Zion Presb. Church, **Charlottetown**. P.E.I.; **Aug. 27**: 8 p.m., Denton Hall, Acadia University, **Wolfville**. N.S.; and **Aug. 28**: 8 p.m., First Presb. Church, **New Glasgow**, N.S. Info.: (905) 389-2104.

Aug. 23 Dutch worship service led by Rev. Jerry Hoytema, 3 p.m., CRC, 70 Hwy. 53 E., **Ancaster**, Ont.

Aug. 28 Retirement open house for Rev. Aren P. Geisterfer, 8-10 p.m., Immanuel CRC (corner Mohawk Rd. & West 5th St.), **Hamilton**, Ont. Sponsored by the McMaster Campus Committee. Info.: (905) 526-7519. (#)

to Sept. 11 A major 15-yr. retrospective art exhibition by George Langbroek. At the Rodman Hall Arts Centre, 109 St. Paul Cr., **St. Catharines**, Ont. Info.: (905) 684-2925.

Sept. 19 Camp Shalom's 21st Annual Fall Fair, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., at Camp Shalom, on Hwy. 24A, north of **Paris**, Ont. Info.: (519) 623-4860. (#)

Sept. 24-26 CLAC/WRF-sponsored conference exploring christian perspectives on shaping the workplace. At the Holiday Inn, **Burlington**, Ont. Plenary speakers: Don Posterski, Harry Antonides, Lee Hardy, Elwin Beukes and Marc Bacon. Free public presentation with Dr. John Bolt on Frid., Sept. 25, on: "Greed, Goodness, and God - Hope for Canada's Bottom Line." Info.: (905) 670-7386 or visit web page: www.interlog.com/~wrf/cwuf.htm

Sept. 25 Celebrating 40 years of Christ-centred education! At Wellandport Christian School, **Wellandport**, Ont. All former students, teachers, supporters and committee members are invited to attend a barbeque, open house and thanksgiving program from 4-10 p.m. Info.: (905) 386-6272. (#)

Sept. 26 Toronto District Chr. High School's 35th Anniversary Celebration Dinner! All friends of TDCH are invited to attend this event at TDCH, **Woodbridge**, Ont. Tickets $35. Info.: (905) 851-1772.

Oct. 4 Dutch worship service led by Rev. Jacob Kuntz, 3 p.m., CRC, 70 Hwy. 53 E., **Ancaster**, Ont.

Oct. 11 First CRC, **Owen Sound**, Ont. celebrates its 50th anniversary! Variety program on Friday. Homecoming tea/dinner on Saturday. Special service on Sunday. Info.: Linda DeBoer at (519) 371-6192. (#)

Oct. 17 "A Day of Encouragement and Training" (for deacons, elders and other caregivers) at Hamilton District Chr. High School, **Ancaster**, Ont. Theme: "Follow the Way of Love!" Featuring 54 workshops, including special sessions for elders and caregivers. Also six workshops geared especially towards persons with a disability and their caregivers. Cost $40. Contact your deacons for a registration form, or call Diaconal Ministries at (905) 646-4511. (#)

Nov. 6 Christian Festival Concert by the choirs and brass of the O.C.M.A., Leendert Kooij, director. Guest artists: Andre Knevel, Sander van Marion, Lisette Emmink, the Kooij sisters, and the Concert Band "Euphonia." At 8 p.m., Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto**, Ont. Info./tickets: (416) 636-9779. (#)

Nov. 15 Dutch worship service led by Rev. John Klomps, 3 p.m., CRC, 70 Hwy. 53 E., **Ancaster**, Ont.

Nov. 27 Ebenezer CRC, **Jarvis**, Ont. will be celebrating 50 years of service to our God at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Centre, **Port Dover**, Ont. All former and present members are invited to attend. Info.: (519) 587-5069.

In memoriam: Paul Schrotenboer, 1922-1998

Strong proponent of education and inter-church conversation had Canadian ties

Richard Van Houten

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — On July 16, Dr. Paul G. Schrotenboer left this life after a long struggle with cancer. Paul was a servant to both the Christian Reformed Church and the evangelical world beyond it.

His main work was his 25 years as the first general secretary of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (then called the Reformed Ecumenical Synod), but he also pursued his concerns in Christian higher education along the way.

Work in Canada

Paul was a familiar figure in the Canadian section of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, perhaps even more than in the U.S.

He was born in Overisel, Michigan, a rural community near Holland in 1922. After studying for the ministry and graduating from Calvin Seminary in 1947, he continued studies first at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia and then at the Free University of Amsterdam.

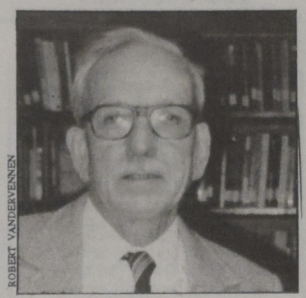
He and his wife, Bernice, then moved to Canada, serving congregations in Ottawa (1955-1960) and then in St. Catharines (1960-1963). While in St. Catharines, he and colleague Dr. Louis Praamsma were in a horrendous automobile accident that nearly took their lives.

Paul was also active there in the movement to create a Christian university. For a couple of years he worked part-time as the development director for the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship (AACS), now the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS).

Opened windows

Paul attended the 1963 meeting of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod in Grand Rapids. The RES decided at that meeting to hire a staff person, and Paul accepted that job to complement his work for the AACS. In 1966, the RES work became full time and he moved to Grand Rapids to open an office.

I believe Paul dragged the RES almost singlehandedly onto the world scene. He took the initiative to visit other world gatherings and represent RES member denominations there. He opened contacts with the



ROBERT VANDERVENNEN

Dr. Paul G. Schrotenboer

World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the World Council of Churches.

From 1972 on, he attended the annual meetings of the secretaries of the Christian World Communions, and brought those interests back to churches that, like the CRC, were not very interested in churches different from themselves.

He also contacted the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF), and eventually he became the convener of their ecumenical issues taskforce. He initiated contacts between evangelical churches and the Roman Catholic Church, and managed several ecumenical study projects for them.

Within the RES/REC, Paul pursued his belief that prolonged conversations would always be more Christian and more effective than threats and ultimatums. In spite of his own theological differences with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN), he always felt they belonged in the RES.

He was a staunch opponent of apartheid, but never advocated the isolation or suspension of the Dutch Reformed Church. Suspending relations never seemed to him to be a positive strategy. I recall the night in Harare, Zimbabwe, when the delegates arranged a farewell evening to acknowledge his retirement. On that very day, however, four churches had more or less declared their intention to resign because the RES had not expelled the GKN.

Left indelible mark

Out in the hall before his farewell, he said, "This is the saddest day of my life." He was not talking about leaving his job, but he felt that some of his life's work was coming apart. He truly believed one could hold confessional integrity and be open to relations with many other Christian traditions. Unfortunately, the separatist mentality remained strong, and he endured disappointments.

After leaving the REC, Paul worked part-time for an association of Reformed Christian academics, the International Association for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education. In spite of his illness, which emerged in 1990, he managed to arrange and attend several international conferences. This was a project that picked up his old love for the goals of the AACS.

Paul wrote or edited several books. By my count, he also oversaw the production of some 60 different publications for the RES. In the last few years, he was still working on a book called *Commitment in Learning*, which was intended to encourage Christian students in their studies. According to Bernice Schrotenboer, some friends will do the final editing and make sure the book is published.

Paul Schrotenboer's work and person left impressions around the world. Even after 10 years as his successor, I still have to identify myself now and then as the guy who followed Schrotenboer. His friends, colleagues and family will surely miss him.

Richard Van Houten succeeded Paul Schrotenboer as executive secretary of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC), whose world headquarters are in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Conditions slowly improving for Romanian orphans

Alan Doerksen

VINELAND, Ont. — Conditions are improving for Romanian children living in orphanages, but much still needs to be done to improve their lives, according to Esther Vahrmeyer. In May, the Vineland, Ont., resident spent a month in Romania working with a team of volunteers from Reformed Bible College (RBC) in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Haunting images

Many Canadians will recall news stories and haunting pictures of Romanian orphans that caught the country's attention eight years ago. Romania's former dictator, Nicolae Ceaucescu, had banned contraception, encouraged families to have many children, and turned state orphanages into dumping grounds for at least 100,000 unwanted children. Many of them were given little attention other than food and diaper changes, and were left to rock aimlessly back and forth in rooms crowded full of cribs.

After the revolution that toppled Ceaucescu's regime in

COURTESY ESTHER VAHRMEYER

Esther Vahrmeyer with two Romanian orphans.

1990, some 2,000 Romanian babies and children were adopted by Canadian couples and brought to Canada, according to the *Globe and Mail*.

Now, eight years later, conditions in the country are improving, but not much for Romania's orphans, says Vahrmeyer. In May, she and nine other Canadian and American volunteers worked at three orphanages and ministered to street kids in the Romanian capital, Bucharest, and the city of Sigiswaara.

At the orphanages, Vahrmeyer and the other volunteers played for several hours during each visit with the children. They looked after the kids, taking them out of their cribs and holding them.

"The rooms smelled horrible," asserts Vahrmeyer, explaining that nurses would change children's diapers only twice a day. Other than that, nurses gave the children little attention.

The rooms were crowded, but not as badly as Vahrmeyer had expected. Many of the children are emotionally disturbed and some would rock themselves back and forth in their cribs, says Vahrmeyer.

Orphanage children get some schooling after age 8. The children ranged from newborns to age 16. After that age, many are sent to insane asylums, where they are taught trades, says Vahrmeyer.

One fact that disturbs her is that 60 per cent of the children in such orphanages are not actually orphans but have been abandoned by their parents.

While in Romania, Vahrmeyer and two other volunteers stayed at the home of a Romanian woman who spoke no English. That was a challenge for Vahrmeyer, who learned a few words of Romanian before her trip.

The team of volunteers also spent time feeding street children at a special centre in Sigiswaara. The centre was started by members of a U.S.-based Church of the Nazarene. With the help of translators, the volunteers also told Bible stories to the street children.

Vahrmeyer says she'd love to return to Romania. Last year, she graduated from Calvin College with a bachelor's degree in exercise science. After graduating, she spent a year in Lynden, Washington, working as a personal trainer at a fitness centre.

Steve Pettis is the professor of missions and cross-cultural studies at RBC who led the team of volunteers to Romania. It was the first such RBC project to take place in Romania. All of the volunteers were RBC students except Vahrmeyer, explains Pettis. The one-month project counts as course credit for some of the RBC students.

Pettis believes Romanian orphanages have improved much. He found them clean, uncrowded and the children well-cared-for, in contrast to Vahrmeyer's observations. But Pettis notes that he and Vahrmeyer did not visit all of the same orphanages. Some Romanian orphanages get outside help from international volunteers, says Pettis. Those orphanages tend to be in better condition.

Next May, RBC will send a second team of volunteers to Romania, Pettis confirmed.